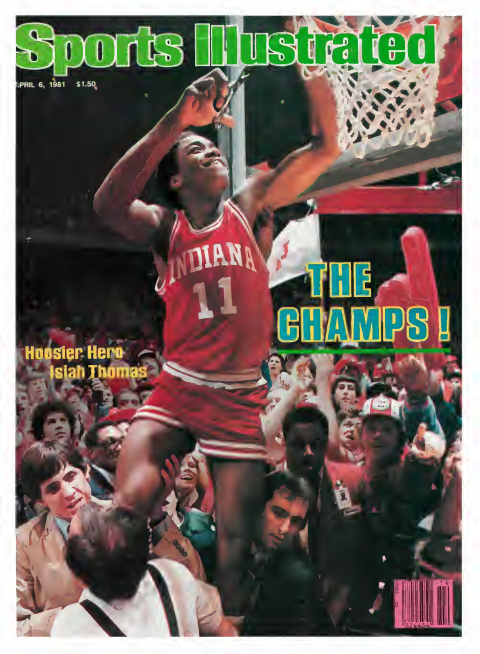


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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



HENCKEL, CARRYING ON IN HER GRANDMOTHER'S TRADITION

It's only appropriate that we introduce our deputy picture editor, Barbara Henckel, the same week we cover the Avon tennis championships (page 63). Henckel is the granddaughter of Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman, who won 44 national tennis titles, donated the Wightman Cup and was playing tennis until her death in 1974 at age 87.

"We grandchildren—there are 13 of us—thought of her just as our grandmother," says Henckel. "She lived a block from the Longwood Cricket Club in Boston, and she wouldn't let us into the wonderful pool there until we'd hit a few balls off the backboard. She was great at all games—woe to the person she lured down to the Ping-Pong room—and she urged on all her grandchildren and even those of her 11 great-grandchildren who were old enough to hold a racket or a paddle. She kept in touch with all of us by sending us postcards that she wrote while her car was stopped at red lights. For many years she designed a calendar with the pictures of her five children and their families on it. She had terrific determination and spunk."

As does her granddaughter, who wears a gold bracelet given her grandmother for winning the 1906 California championship. Encouraged by a swimming coach at age 14, Henckel competed in meets in New Jersey, Connecticut and New York for the Yonkers, N.Y. YWCA in the backstroke, butterfly and individual medley and has a boxful of medals to prove it. "I love anything to do with the water," says Henckel, who still swims up to half a

mile a day at the St. Bartholomew pool in New York City and "endlessly" during summers at her parents' home in Niantic, Conn. She keeps her 18½-foot Cape Dory Alberg Typhoon sailboat at Niantic so that when she's not in the water she can be on it.

Henckel has rarely been far from sports—water or otherwise. Her first job after graduating from the Westchester Business School was as a secretary to the president of NBC-TV News; it brought her into contact with all manner of public figures. "Whoever was in the news," she says. Following that, Henckel spent six months in Hawaii catching up on swimming and sailing before coming to work for SI in 1968 as a reader-service correspondent. Four years later she joined our picture department, where she was in turn a Girl Friday, a researcher and an editor. Her specialty was the Olympics—both summer and winter. It's a high-pressure assignment that for two weeks at a stretch requires handling a nonstop flow of pictures on a variety of sports. It was good training for higher ground. As deputy picture editor, Henckel supervises the making of assignments, handles the budget, evaluates portfolios, assists Picture Editor John Dominis in editing—she has retained tennis as her special province—and, presumably, turns out the office lights at night.

Philip D. Hawley



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BOOKTALK

by RICHARD ROGIN

THE STORY OF A JOURNEY THAT TOOK A YEAR AND WAS STRICTLY FOR THE BIRDS

James M. Vardaman of Jackson, Miss., runs a successful forest-management firm, but his master passion is bird watching, which is abundantly clear after reading *Call Collect, Ask for Birdman* (St. Martin's Press, \$10.95), a detailed chronicle of Vardaman's "Big Year," as birds call it. During 1979 he spent more than \$44,000 traveling 161,500 miles by plane, boat, car, bicycle and foot, chasing everything from Albert's towhee to the zone-tailed hawk in an effort to see a record-breaking 700 species of North American birds. In a dramatic finish he wound up sighting 699, breaking the old record by 42 birds.

The game was mostly played by American Birding Association rules—the ABA checklist, its limited definition of North America, the need for a reliable witness for every sighting, etc. Because Vardaman is eternally modest about his own birding talents—"Was I good enough to play in the birding big leagues?"—he set up a strategy council of top professional birders. Then he made sure they were in the field with him for identification.

Vardaman's skill was in getting to the right place at the right time to see the right bird. A national intelligence network of helpful birders also alerted him to rare sightings by calling collect on his birding hot line. This supplemented his planned trips with sudden tense chases after rarities. Would the bird stay put long enough for him to see it?

Coding every one of the 811 North American species according to rareness, Vardaman concluded that after subtracting Code 6 and 7 birds—those he had less than a 10% chance of seeing in a given year—his reasonable maximum total was 726. He came close and even managed to see nine of the 85 rarities, including a Middendorff's grasshopper warbler.

Vardaman's accomplishment roused cheers and criticism. One old-fashioned birder said Vardaman's record pursuit was akin to "counting out-of-state license plates." Furthermore, critics contended, Vardaman's achievement was unduly abetted by his flying squad of birding pros.

Still, his detractors had to admire his perseverance. Vardaman once traveled 5,000 miles to spot a rare Siberian chickadee but later had to remove it from his list when it was positively identified as a pale version of the common black-capped chickadee.

Undaunted, Vardaman is now in the planning stages of a worldwide "Big Year." With inflation, his budget for this epic is more than \$1 million. His goal: 5,000 species. **END**

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SCORECARD

Edited by JERRY KIRSHENBAUM

INTO THE CLOWN'S MOUTH

For the past eight years, a golf outing called the Tournament Players Championship has been grandly declaring itself a major event while much of the public has been busy stifling yawns, thereby proving it's tough to become a major championship by self-proclamation. But what the latest TPC, a rain-delayed tournament completed on March 23 at Sawgrass near Jacksonville, further demonstrated was even more illuminating, namely, that the PGA Tour isn't going to have much luck trying to cure its ills with gimmickry and hype.

The game's woes are real enough. Because of mounting greens fees and a sharp decline in caddying opportunities, golf has had difficulty attracting younger participants, leaving the sport very much the province of a relatively small number of older, mostly affluent folk. And the PGA Tour, with its shortage of colorful personalities, has had difficulty attracting new fans. No wonder TV coverage has been shrinking and sponsors have been falling all over themselves trying to induce the sport's few big names to play in their tournaments. Development at Sawgrass suggest, however, that it might be better just to ride out the hard times than to resort to some of the desperate measures tried so far.

Take the unprecedented windfall reaped by Raymond Floyd in winning the TPC. To attract the strongest possible fields, tournament promoters have lately been joining forces to offer improbable monetary incentives. For example, sponsors of the TPC and two earlier Florida events, the Inverrary Classic and the Doral Open, combined to offer bonuses to anybody winning all three events (\$500,000), any two of the events successively (\$250,000), or the first and third of them (\$100,000). Enter Floyd, who had won the Doral the week before the TPC. By then winning the TPC, he pocketed not only \$72,000 in first-prize money (his purse at the Doral was \$45,000) but also the \$250,000 bonus, there-

by enjoying far and away the biggest payday in golf history.

Though the bonus delighted Floyd, it didn't do much for golf. Duke Butler, executive director of the Houston Golf Association, which refused to let its tournament, the Houston Open, join with the Byron Nelson Classic and Colonial National Invitation in a similar bonus scheme in Texas last spring, says, "I think gimmicks hurt golf, and this is certainly a gimmick." Butler believes that golf is a good enough game to stand on its own, and he may have a point. To win the TPC, Floyd dramatically came from six strokes back to force a playoff, in which he beat Barry Jaeckel, who had led after the second and third rounds, and Curtis Strange. But because of the fuss over all that loot, the circumstances of Floyd's exciting victory were obscured.

Another dubious innovation at the TPC was the introduction of new computerized scoreboards that were generous with biographical info and promotional messages—SUPPORT JUNIOR GOLF—but stingy about dispensing such incidental intelligence as who was leading the tournament, prompting one player, Jim Simons, to lament, "Every time I looked at the board I kept finding out how tall I was." Other players grumbled about the new course across the road from Sawgrass that, starting next year, will host the TPC and serve as the PGA Tour's home layout. The greens are too small and cute for their own good—the 17th green is literally an island—and may end up producing better wisecracks than golf, the best so far being by Miller Barber. He told the architect, Pete Dye, "I want to congratulate you on a magnificent golf course. It's just sensational. When are you going to put the greens in?" Chimes in Jay Haas, "I wonder if anyone has hit one in the clown's mouth yet." Jack Nicklaus, himself a golf-course architect, tried defending Dye's handiwork over dinner one evening with Tom Watson by suggesting that the course could be made more playable with some

routine, if costly, revisions. Watson's reply seemed to reflect the frustration rampant in pro golf these days: "Why in the world can't these things be done right the first time?"

CHICKENHARTY

Since 1961, Chick Hearn has been entertaining Los Angeles Laker fans with his distinctive run-and-gun delivery as the club's broadcaster on radio and TV. Hearn became so popular that an antenna had to be installed on the Forum's roof to allow dozing Angelenos to tune him in on transistor radios while attending



games, just as they insist on listening to Vin Scully while watching the Dodgers. Two weeks ago, to commemorate his 20th anniversary as the Laker broadcaster, Hearn was honored at halftime ceremonies attended by former Laker stars Jerry West and Elgin Baylor and owner Jerry Buss, who read greetings from President Reagan and L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley. A highlight of the festivities came when actress Angie Dickinson presented Hearn with a popcorn maker in recognition of a favorite expression of his: "He faked his man into the popcorn machines."

That's just one of Hearn's many colorful contributions to the basketball idiom. Hearn is credited with originating such expressions as "air ball," "finger roll," "throwing up a prayer," "no harm, no foul" and "dribble drive." He has also helped popularize "slam dunk," "unsundered points" and "fallaway jumper." And he gets chuckles from listeners by

continued

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telling them things like, "The Lakers are moving left to right across your radio dial." Other Chickens:

The mustard fell off the hot dog. Translation: somebody has just committed a mistake caused by excessive showboating.

Frozen rope. Metaphor for an arcelless shot, also used in baseball to refer to line drives.

Like a motorcycle in a motordrome. That's a shot that rolls, seemingly forever, around the rim.

Yo-yoing. What Oscar Robertson, for example, used to do with the ball while dribbling.

Hard though it is to believe, Hearn swears that his best lines usually occur to him during the frantic action of games. "The only way expressions are any good is if they come spontaneously," he says. "You can't write them down or plan them. The key for me is to be able to visualize them from other things in life. They're just things that pop out of my big Irish mouth."

ONCE A SPEED MERCHANT ...

The Seattle Mariners were playing the San Diego Padres in an exhibition game in Yuma, Ariz. last week when, in the seventh inning, Mariner Manager Mazy Wills left to catch a flight that enabled him to spend some time at his suburban Los Angeles house before rejoining the club in Palm Springs, Calif. for a game against the California Angels. Trouble was, Wills neglected to clear his early departure with Mariner President Don O'Brien, who later chided the erstwhile base-running whiz for his hasty exit. The *Los Angeles Times* reported the incident in a story that carried just the right headline: **WILLS REPRIMANDED FOR STEALING HOME.**

MORE THAN A GAME

In 33 years of coaching Missouri high school basketball, Ray DeGreeff won 634 games, putting him among the winningest coaches in the state's history. But DeGreeff never achieved what he described as his chief goal: making it to the final four of the state tournament. This year DeGreeff's school, St. Francis Borgia High of Washington, Mo., where he coached the last 27 years, finally realized that objective, reaching the state 3A final before losing to Chillicothe 58-49. However, DeGreeff didn't live to see it. He was stricken with cancer

early last year, was replaced as coach three months ago by assistant Steve Ruether and died at the age of 63 on the morning of the victory over Bowling Green High that put Borgia into the final four.

The win over Bowling Green, at the time the state's top-ranked 3A team, was one to remember. Borgia never led in regulation time and trailed 73-64 with barely a minute left but stormed back to tie Bowling Green 73-73. After the first overtime the score was 75-75. It was 83-83 after the second overtime, but only because Bowling Green missed two free throws in the waning seconds. The game remained tied, 87-87, after overtime No. 3 and so on through Nos. 4 and 5, with Bowling Green blowing other chances to win. Borgia finally pulled ahead in the sixth OT and as the last 30 seconds of its 111-107 victory ticked away, the outcome at last settled, a spine-tingling chant resounded from the Borgia rosters: "Coach DeGreeff... Coach DeGreeff... Coach DeGreeff."

It was an emotional occasion, at once jubilant and sad, that even the losing coach found inspirational. "With the death of their coach and all those overtimes, this was more than a game—it was spooky," said Bowling Green's Tom Burr. The winning coach, Ruether, spoke movingly of his predecessor. Noting that DeGreeff was a pillar of the community who, in addition to coaching basketball, had taught business and physics and had headed the local Soap Box Derby, Ruether said, "Believe it or not, I knew we were going to win, even when we were nine points down, even through six overtimes. The spirit of the man was right here with us."

BONANZAS

What with all the hardship it has caused, we're happy that the drought that the nationwide drought has also had one or two salutary effects. Dr. Herb Austin, a fisheries oceanographer at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, notes that with the shortage of rainfall there has been a sharp reduction in the amount of fertilizer, pesticides, sewage, oil and other pollutants being washed into Chesapeake Bay. This is good news, especially if it turns out that such contaminants have contributed to the recent worrisome decline in the Bay's fish populations (SCORECARD, March 30). Nor is this the only blessing the drought has bestowed

on the eastern seaboard. Because the inflow from rivers into North Carolina's sounds is far below normal levels, ocean tides now extend farther than usual into those estuaries, increasing the salinity on which many shellfish thrive and thus giving new life to shrimp beds that have not always been productive in recent years. The resulting bonanza of harvestable shrimp proves that even rainless clouds have silver linings.

DR. C

You're all familiar with Dr. J, but what about Dr. C? He's Denton Cooley, the renowned Houston heart surgeon. A varsity basketball player during his undergraduate days at Texas, Cooley made a \$750,000 donation, through his Denton A. Cooley Foundation, toward construction of a \$2.6 million athletic complex at Johns Hopkins Medical School, from which he graduated in 1944. In Baltimore for dedication of the facility, called the Denton A. Cooley Recreation Center and featuring a basketball court, two saunas and courts for racquetball and squash, Dr. C showed that he could still spin a basketball on one finger. Then the 6'4" surgeon ceremoniously scored the first basket in the new gym—a vintage 20-foot, one-hand push shot.

THEY SAID IT

● Harry Neale, Vancouver Canucks' coach, whose team continues to struggle in rival NHL arenas despite following a psychologist's recommendation that the players wear road uniforms designed to make themselves look more fearsome. "That psychologist is now seeing a psychiatrist."

● Mark Snow, a skinny, 6'10" New Mexico basketball player, assessing his talents in a speech to the school's booster club: "Strength is my biggest weakness."

● Jerry Tarkanian, Nevada-Las Vegas basketball coach, on how he prepares his team for games at Wyoming, where the elevation is 7,165 feet: "I try to tell our guys that the altitude isn't that bad because we're playing indoors."

● Al Clark, American League umpire, explaining why he refers to the Detroit Tigers' manager as George Anderson: "I refuse to call a 47-year-old man Sparky."

● Jack Buck, St. Louis Cardinal broadcaster, after catching a glimpse of George Steinbrenner's yacht on Tampa Bay: "It was a beautiful thing to behold, with all 36 oars working in unison."



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AND A LITTLE CHILD LED THEM

As though drawing inspiration from the Book of Isaiah, baby-faced Isiah Thomas spurred Indiana to a fourth NCAA championship by **CURRY KIRKPATRICK**

In the end it was North Carolina that Bobby Knight shoved up against the wall in Philadelphia. Let that be the story of Indiana's 1981 NCAA championship, not the tawdry tale of Knight's scrap two nights before. The 63-50 beating the Hoosiers administered to Carolina on Monday night in the Spectrum was not so much a win as a wearing-out. This unrelenting team performance couldn't be upstaged by individual heroics. Not by the wondrous leadership of Isiah Thomas and his game-high 23 points. Not by James Thomas, who was off the bench and on the boards and everywhere that the Tar Heels' star marksman, Al Wood, was sure to go. And certainly not by the Challenge at Cherry Hill, in which Knight roughed up an LSU fan who had called him names in a New Jersey hotel lounge. After Knight shoved him, the fan landed in a wastebasket.

On Monday night the coach made his

presence known in more subtle, but equally forceful, ways. With the Hoosiers behind by eight points (16-8) midway through the first half and looking surprisingly vulnerable, he sent in the 6' 3" Jim to join the 6' 1" Isiah for an all-sophomore, all-Thomas backcourt. On offense, Guard Randy Wittman moved to the wing, where he "took what I could get" in the way of shots. That turned out to be four bombs that shredded the Carolina zone and gave the Hoosiers a 27-26 halftime lead, their first of the game.

The defensive adjustments forged by the entrance of Thomas, J. were even more important. When he moved in to guard Wood, Landon Turner switched over to guard Center Sam Perkins, who had scored seven points in the first 9½ minutes. Now, Knight had the matchups he surely wanted all along.

Indiana "plays five guards—one point and four palling," another coach had said jokingly earlier in the tournament, although such a definition neglects the contributions of Thomas, J., who has both size and speed. "We just kept pounding

continued

Thomas had 23 points in the title game, two on this breakaway field goal against Jimmy Black.

TY OF P
WELCOM

away," said the 6' 10", 241-pound Turner more accurately.

In the second half this is what the Indiana defense wrought: Thomas, J. and Turner held Wood and Perkins to five baskets and five rebounds between them. Ray Tibbert thwarted the dangerous James Worthy even more, spinning a one-hit shutout. In that final period, Worthy tallied one rebound and no points and fouled out with 5:07 to play and the game long gone. This was in severe contrast to the afternoon in December when the Tar Heels beat Indiana 65-56. In that game Isiah played so poorly Knight benched him.

Things went sour for Carolina immediately following intermission. Thomas, I., who had shot a perfect 1 for 7 in the first half, stole a pass near midcourt and went in for the trip. Although Perkins got the basket back with an alley-oop drop-in, Indiana's little prophet with the halloo checks soon was off and away. Next Isiah fed Turner—31-28. Then Isiah picked off another pass, this one intended for Perkins down low ("The ball was slippery," Isiah modestly said), and raced in to give Indiana a 33-28 lead. "The way they jumped on us there broke our backs," Wood admitted later. Two more Isiah baskets and it was 39-30. Isiah from the circle and Wotman, who finished

with 16 points, off the glass made it 45-34 at 12:31. Meanwhile, at the other end of the floor it was obvious that the Tar Heels weren't going to pierce the Hoosier defenses if they played until July.

Knight's objective—"to break down" the other team psychologically and physically—was being realized all too clearly. Even when Wood, who would get 18 points, brought his team luck to within seven with eight minutes remaining, all the Hoosiers did was spread out against Carolina's half-court traps and get the ball into Isiah's last and sure hands.

The 1976 national champion Hoosiers, who were regarded as the terror of the age, beat their five tournament opponents by a total of 66 points. This edition beat its five foes by 113.

This was billed as a Big Top of Final Fours, a veritable Barnum & Bailey production featuring the game's most famous faces, talents and—college basketball being that most overcoached of all sports—brains. Imagine Dean Smith! Bobby Knight! The Four Corners! General Patton!

The quartet of teams—Virginia and LSU filled out the hand opposite North Carolina and Indiana—had won 111 games all told, had hardly been tested in their regionals and had all peaked to become the four best in actual fact if not



THERE'S NO DOUBTING THOMAS

The smile. You notice the smile first. When Isiah Thomas smiles, when his eyes light up and his teeth flash and those huge dimples appear, you can't help but think of the last sophomore guard who took a Big Ten team to the NCAA basketball championship. Earvin (Magic) Johnson, now with the Los Angeles Lakers, did it for Michigan State two years ago. But nobody calls Isiah "Magic." His coach at Indiana, Bobby Knight, calls him "Per Wee." His old pal from the West Side of Chicago, Mark Aguirre, knows him as "Zeke." To Indiana's fans, who have taken to displaying bed sheets with quotations from the Book of Isiah ("And a little child shall lead them"), he is "Mr. Wonderful."

Now that Indiana has the title and Thomas the MVP award, it remains to be seen whether he will follow Johnson's example and turn pro prematurely. Although he's only 6' 11" tall, seven inches shorter than Magic, he has the shooting, passing and dribbling skills to make a first-rate NBA guard. Even be-

fore the championship game, North Carolina Coach Dean Smith was comparing Thomas to Phil Ford, the former Tar Heel playmaker who now stars for the Kansas City Kings. "We're talking about two of the best point guards in college basketball history," Smith said.

Thomas is leaving the door open for pro offers. "If I have the opportunity, I probably will look at it," Thomas said before his 23-point, five-assist effort against the Tar Heels. However, he might well stay on at IU, with an eye to becoming a lawyer one day. "You can only play basketball so long," he says, "and then you have 35 or 40 more years to do something else with your life."

The youngest of nine children, Thomas grew up so poor that he remembers "times we couldn't eat." When the family couldn't afford sufficient food, Isiah's mother, Mary, whom he describes as "the greatest woman in the world," would take food from the cafeteria where she worked. His father, also

named Isiah, tried to make ends meet by driving a truck. "I wouldn't trade anything for those days now," young Isiah says. "You learned to take care of your shoes, you learned to take care of your shirt." Today Thomas carries himself in a way that gives no clue to his past deprivation. He speaks slowly and softly, thoughtfully and articulately. His taste in clothes runs to three-piece suits.

When Thomas was a senior at Westchester St. Joseph's High, he was one of the top college prospects in the country. He was under intense pressure to join his buddy Aguirre at DePaul, but finally he decided to play for Knight. He had received mail saying Knight tied up his players and beat them. "It was so crazy," says Thomas, "that no intelligent person could believe it." When Knight visited the Thomas home, one of Isiah's brothers, who wanted him to attend DePaul, embarrassed him by insulting the IU coach and engaging him in a shouting match. Nevertheless, Thomas stuck to his decision. He figured that getting away to Bloomington would be as good for him as Knight's discipline.

Thomas was so superior to any of the other Indiana players that Knight realized he

Women's hot hand put Indiana ahead as the first half ended, and helped keep it ahead thereafter

in the final poll. Too often the meek inherit the NCAA finals; this year, no. Here were the game's reigning giant, Ralph Sampson, its beaming cherub, Isiah Thomas; the Tar Heels' baseline of first-round draft-choice celebrities; and the Tigers' den of versatile, gold-jewelry-adorned athletes who had an edge, said one coach, "only if Sammy Davis Jr shows up to referee."

Adding a bit of color to the usual gubernatorial wagering on the semifinal games (Dalton of Virginia put up a ham against a bushel of oysters from Hunt of North Carolina, Treen of Louisiana put up crawfish against popcorn and ripe persimmons from Orr of Indiana) was an agreement between the Charlottesville Daily Progress and The Chapel Hill Newspaper that the loser's hometown journal must print its Monday logo in the hues of the winning school, orange or blue.

Knight had prepared for LSU during Indiana's Midwest Regional victory over Alabama-Birmingham, a team similar in size and style to the Tigers. He had matched up Turner on Rudy Macklin (size and speed trump speed) and Tol-

bert on Leonard Mitchell (senior trumps freshman), and he wasn't about to be doubting his Thomases; if Isiah was to be delivered into foul trouble, Jim was sure to bail the Hoosiers out.

Thomas, J., whose middle name is destined to be No Relation, is a sophomore from Florida who used to be known as the only player Knight has recruited outside his Indiana-Illinois-Ohio power base. That was before he gained a new dimension by starting off the bench at two positions in the regional. But LSU Coach Dale Brown didn't know that. "The new guy. The guy we didn't even talk about," Brown called him after Thomas, J. replaced Thomas, I. and accomplished the little things—a couple of blocks and assists, a steal and defensive harassment, a team-leading nine rebounds—to key the 67-49 humiliation of LSU in the semifinals.

It didn't start as a blowout, though. Even with Macklin subpar (his split finger forced him to "re-catch" passes, as he put it) and the team shooting 40%, Brown had watched his game plan unfold perfectly. The Tigers were clawing on defense, Point Guard Ethan Martin had slithered his way to seven points and seven assists, had an fact contained Thomas, I., and had forced him to the bench with three fouls with

would have to adjust his coaching style. This wasn't easy for a man who believes so strongly in the concept of team basketball. Meanwhile, Thomas had to learn that, to play for Knight, he couldn't display the same kind of freedom that, say, Aguirre does at DePaul. At the 1979 Pan American Games in Puerto Rico, Knight got so mad at Thomas he threatened to put him on a plane home. "You ought to go to DePaul, Isiah," Knight recalls yelling at the freshman-to-be "because you sure as hell aren't going to be an Indiana player playing like that."

A productive first year, in which Thomas teamed with Mike Woodson to lead Indiana to the Big Ten championship (the Hoosiers were beaten by Purdue in the Midwest Regional of the ensuing NCAAAs), didn't resolve the conflict between Knight and Thomas. Before this season began, Knight became so upset with Thomas that he kicked him out of a practice. "It was my turn, I guess," says Thomas, flashing that smile. Knight was making a point and the point was this: no player, no matter how talented, is bigger than Knight's philosophy.

The relationship began to improve in late

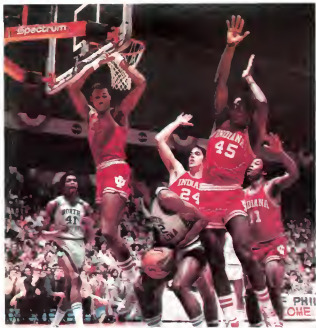


Isiah Thomas was The Main Man for Indiana

December, when Knight made Thomas the captain and told him to run the show on the floor. Thomas responded so positively that, as the season unfolded, he and his coach became downright friendly. When a Purdue player took a cheap shot at Isiah in a game at Bloomington, Knight called a press conference to defend his star. And 19 days later, when Thomas hit an Iowa player and was ejected from a game, Knight refused to criticize Thomas. In return, Thomas has become intensely loyal to Knight. After Indiana beat St. Joseph's to win the Midwest Regional in Bloomington, one of the first things Thomas did upon entering the locker room was to urge a couple of high school stars sought by Indiana to work hard over the summer "so we can do it again next year." Hardly the words, by the way, of a man seriously considering the pros.

In his 26 minutes of playing time against LSU last Saturday, Pee Wee displayed his myriad skills, hitting six of eight shots, scoring 14 points and dishing out four assists. After a plodding start, Monday's game was even better. You might even say it was his Magic moment.

—WILLIAM F. REED



With Turner, Wittman, Tolbert and Thomas, J. hemming him in, Worthy's game was unworthy of him.

THE FINAL FOUR continued

3:14 left in the first half. But now, with a 30-27 lead, Brown removed Martin "for a rest" and went into a delay game.

What LSU meant to do was spread its offense for only one possession. But, in fact, the Tigers never attacked at all. They didn't take advantage of a tight and anxious Indiana that was on the ropes and missing its leader as well as its easy shots. They didn't increase the lead to five or six or 10 points, which seemed within their reach. They didn't take one more shot before the end of the half.

"If they hadn't slowed it down... well, we were content to be down three," said Knight.

In the locker room, where the Indiana coach wins most of his battles, he won another. Instead of screaming at Turner and Tolbert (4 of 13)—"Ray's a hyper kid, he is in the ozone," Knight said—or eating a chair, Knight settled his troops, urging them to sit back, relax, "sprawl out." The Hoosier defense

was intense enough; there would be no change in assignments. Offensively, the Indiana shooters were told to act with poise, not anxiety. "We had the shots, but we were goosing the ball up there. No finesse," Knight said later. "We played like we would get one point for hitting the backboard."

A revived Tolbert roared out and slam-dunked a rebound, and the Hoosiers got the first 11 points of the second half. While Macklin and Willie Sims—who together missed 16 of 20 shots—and the other LSU shooters either walked or forced bricks or simply panicked, Turner scored on a turnaround, a layup three-pointer, a tip-in. At 36-30 Thomas, J. committed his fourth foul and left the game again. But LSU's Greg Cook missed a point-blank jumper, and Thomas, J. ripped the rebound off the iron to start a fast break that Turner ended with his fourth basket in a row.

At 40-34 the Indiana long knives came out. Ted Kitchel and Wittman buried two faraway jumpers apiece in a 12-2 run

that made it 52-36 with 9:01 left. From Tiger rag to Tiger gag, LSU tried to recover too quickly. Its players were under duress and questioning themselves. Their shots wouldn't fall. Tap-backs, roll-arounds, tip-outs. "They broke our spirit," Brown said.

Seldom had a good, mobile team, seemingly in control of its destiny, gone so quickly so quietly. Or been so devastated. Turner, who scored a game-high 20 points, held Macklin scoreless in the second half. Thomas, J. did likewise to Martin. During one agonizing stretch that began late in the first half, LSU went 9 for 21. Nine points, 21 minutes. "I get in foul trouble and everybody goes hay-wire," said Thomas, J.

Barbed wire is what North Carolina vs. Virginia had been in two previous matchups. The Tar Heels spent so much time figuring out how to control Sampson, they forgot how to control the ball with 13- and 16-point leads. "I don't think the down-13 trick will work again," UVA Coach Terry Holland said. When Carolina's Wood drove the baseline for a double-pump, no-look no-chance, oily-oxy-free reverse layup either over or under or between Sampson—no one was quite sure—the score was 74-58. Carolina with 13 left, and Holland was out of tricks.

It has been said that no mere mortal can beat the Dean of basketball three times in one season. After the ACC tournament, the gag was that Holland would take his 2-0 over Smith and go home. Certainly, though, the Tar Heels, who won Saturday's semifinal 78-65, laughing, would have lost if Sampson had played like the young Abdul-Jabbarian clone he's supposed to be. Or if Wood had broken both his legs. What was significant was not so much the adjustment Carolina had to make for the 7' 4" Sampson, but what Virginia had to do against the 6' 6" Wood.

The Cavaliers began and ended the first half in a zone, then moved to a diamond and one, then straight-up man-to-man. At least five different Cavs tried to guard or at least knock on Wood. Result: Al was 14 for 19 from the floor, 11 for 13 from the line, 39 points; 10 rebounds. A semifinal scoring record. "I didn't dominate," said Wood, being modest and wrong all at once. "It just so happens I had a short guy on me."

It just so happens that over a stretch of 10:28 late in the second half, Wood

scored nine baskets and 22 points. The spree went from UNC up 39-37 to UNC up 74-58. At Wood 22, Virginia 21. Say good night, Wahoo.

What about the big guy? In UNC-UVA I, Smith threw a collapsing zone at Sampson; in II, more man defense with help. This time Carolina combined the two and was more effective primarily because the 6' 9" Perkins was able to combat Sampson virtually head-on, alone.

When the game was close—through the middle of the second half—the Tar Heels would constantly switch defenses, and when Perkins himself wasn't denying Sampson room—"I've learned how to touch him, to use my arms and hands," Perkins said—he got help from Worthy in from the wing or 6' 7" freshman swingman Matt Doherty sagging down. After

10 to 15 seconds of not getting the ball each time down the court, Sampson's resolve visibly weakened. He was flat-footed, standing around. Perkins matched his stats exactly, 11 points and nine rebounds. But Perkins was 4 for 7 from the floor and Sampson 3 for 10. Late in the game Sampson even leaned against the basket post in a way that caused Wood to ask after his health.

Offensively, the Virginia center got little help from the perimeter—Jeff Lamp and Jeff Jones shot 12 for 31—and though Lee Raker did his usual escapee-from-M*A*S*H routine, his 13 points were not enough.

Bottom line. Holland and the Cavs were as unable to deal with Sampson's offensive difficulties as they were with Wood's offensive brilliance. "He was so

aggressive with the ball," Lamp said. Yes. Wood off the glass. Wood to the end-line. Wood out front. Wood had gotten 33 points against Virginia the last time, so the Cavs were aware of the danger. "We got beat by a great player having a great day," Holland said.

On Monday night it was back to Biblical times, in a manner of speaking. For much of the weekend Isiah's thunder had been stolen by Wood, by another guy on his own team with his own name—and by a wastebasket, for goodness' sake. On Sunday, Thomas was asked if Knight had ever thrown him into a wastebasket. "Not yet," he said.

Well, after grinning all over the Spectrum and bearing the national championship away, what else could a nice and easy fellow like Thomas, I say? **END**

Carolina's Perkins, zipping a pass down low to Worthy here, was the offensive and defensive force in the semifinal that Virginia had expected Sampson to be.



IN SUM, IT WAS SWEET FOR SUGAR

Though Ray Leonard took some lumps from a challenging garbage man, he retained his title and strengthened his future bargaining position by PAT PUTNAM

They held the Who-Is-Going-To-Fight-Sugar-Ray-Leonard-In-The-Big-One auction last week in Syracuse, N.Y., and except for the intrusion of a fistfight, it went rather smoothly. Steven Wainwright was there representing the financial interests of undisputed middleweight champion Marvin Hagler. And Emanuel Steward, the manager of Thomas Hearns, the WBA welterweight champion—Leonard, of course, holds the WBC title—dropped in for two hours of secret talks at the airport. The case for Pipino Cuevas, second-ranked among WBC welters, was made by Manager Rafael Mendoza. Cuevas was a long shot, but Mike Trainer, the mastermind of Leonard's financial empire, likes to keep alternatives in reserve.

They all agreed on one thing: the big payday for one of them will be in the fall. Leonard is already committed to pursuing Ayub Kalule's WBA junior middleweight title in late June. In Syracuse they were jostling to see who would next prosper from Leonard's multimillion-dollar drawing power after he fights Kalule. The talk was about a pot of \$60 million or so, and the winner would be whoever figured to help build it to that level and conceded the lion's share to Sugar Ray.

To relieve the tedium of the negotiating table, Larry Bonds, a left-handed garbage man, was imported from Denver and paid \$100,000 to go a few rounds with Leonard in the new Carrier Dome on the Syracuse University campus. Bonds had not had a fight since April of last year and had fought less than 10 rounds in the last 18 months. Still he was somehow rated No. 6 by the WBC, and

so nobody complained when the bout was billed as a title fight. Bonds certainly didn't care what they called it; his biggest purse before last Saturday night had been about \$1,500.

When Bonds' credentials as a title contender were questioned, Trainer told critics to look elsewhere to find the blameworthy. "All we are doing is following the rules," he said. "We wanted to fight Clint Jackson, which would be a better fight, but he isn't ranked. And the WBC says a champion has to fight every four months against a rated fighter."

WBC ratings in hand, Trainer began making calls in February. Wilfred Benitez, whom Leonard first beat for the title, said no thank you, and fourth-ranked Randy Shields took himself out of contention by asking for \$450,000. The manager of Argentinian Alfredo Lucero said he thought his kid needed a few more fights first. Trainer already was saving

Cuevas as a fall alternative. Fifth-ranked Jorgen Hansen is 38 years old, and that would be an embarrassment. Finally, a call was made to Bobby Lewis, one of Bonds' co-managers.

Says Bonds, who was thinking of retirement: "My manager called me March 2. I was at home shooting eight-ball pool with my wife, Gloria. I didn't get too excited ... although I did lose the game to her."

When Bonds was packing to go east, his three children came into the room with a request. Would he please bring them back Leonard's autograph? Sure, he told them. Shortly after arriving in Syracuse early last week, Bonds asked Leonard for three signed photographs and dutifully mailed them to his family.

"But my kids still want me to win," said Bonds with a small grin. "I told them that if I won, I'd take them to Disneyland. And I told them

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANE STEWART



that if Ray won, he wouldn't do that."

For a 29-year-old who had spent most of his pro career in small clubs in Nevada, Bonds seemed unaffected by the pressure of a title fight. "You call this pressure?" he asked. "Hey, I spend eight hours a day in the alleys with people watching me all the time to see if I throw their garbage cans. Now that's pressure. Besides, people don't think I'm here to win, people just think I'm here. I don't even know why Leonard is training."

Bonds has always had trouble getting fights. He's a southpaw, which makes him undesirable enough, but worse, he's a southpaw who fights with a lot of movement. Nobody looks good against a jittersbugging left-hander. "I've been rejected by some of the best fighters in the world," Bonds said unhappily.

But then, every dark cloud has its \$100,000 lining. It was Bonds' left-handedness that made him so attractive to Leonard. He was a natural stepping-stone to Kalule, a southpaw, who is a natural progression to Hagler, another left-hander.

Syracuse as the fight site was another natural. The upstate New York town hasn't had much in the way of a professional sports attraction since welterweight and middleweight champ Carmen Basilio retired in 1961, and the old Nats took their NBA franchise to Philadelphia 18 years ago. More than 18,000 seats had been sold three days before the bout.

"They aren't coming to see Ray win a fight," said Trainer. "They are coming to see Ray as an attraction. And while we are only making about \$750,000 for this fight, we'll use it on down the road. In future fight negotiations we'll just say, 'Hey, Ray put 20,000 people in the seats in Syracuse. How many do you think your guy would draw?'"

While most experts refused to take Bonds seriously, Leonard did train hard for several weeks. "I think a lot of people are doing an injustice to Bonds," he said. "If it isn't a Hagler or a Hearn or a Cuevas, they call it a mismatch. But I feel I always bring out the very best in people." Then, in contradiction, he added, "But look, he hasn't fought in a long time. There's nothing I can say that can give him credibility. I don't think he'll

be a problem. Not that he's not good, but because he's human. He'll see all those people out there, see all those flash-bulbs snapping, and it will do something to him. If you aren't used to it you get tight. You lose your perspective."

In the end, it was Leonard who would prove to be human, who would lose his perspective. For too long he had listened to those who said Bonds wouldn't be much. It wasn't a disaster, just an embarrassment.

Bonds isn't a heavy hitter; he had knocked out only nine opponents in a 29-3 career. But he's an elusive target, and he has a jab that is stinging enough to be upsetting. It was a style that converted Leonard from a dazzling boxer into an almost plodding flat-footed bully. "I saw early there wasn't any use dancing with him," Leonard said after the bout. "Then we'd both be dancing and nobody would be punching much. To stop him I had to be a bully."

With Leonard reduced to the role of sluggish slugger, his usually accurate combinations were reduced to one-punch misses. Angrily he stalked his nimble prey, looking for the one big hit that would end his frustrations.

It looked as if it had come near the end of the fourth round when Leonard staggered Bonds with a right to the head. Quickly the champion was on his wobbly challenger, firing three punches within the space of a single breath. Bonds fell, but was up at seven. The bell stopped Referee Arthur Mercante's count.

Bonds wasn't through yet. Back on his bicycle, he did enough pedaling to win the next round in the eyes of Judge Carol Castellano. The other officials, Vincent Rainone and Harold Lederman, scored it even.

Leonard chased Bonds for four more rounds, his annoyance growing. He was angry with himself. Then midway through the 10th he slowed Bonds with a right to the head. Leonard swarmed in



Bonds arose from this Round 10 knockdown, but it was all over.

behind a rain of punches. A hook seemed to break Bonds in half, a follow-up right hand dropped him. Bonds was up at the count of six. Once more Leonard was on him, but quickly Mercante moved in to stop the onslaught. Bonds' courage had taken him as far as it would. Many in the crowd beneath the dome booed.

Later, Leonard, still angry over his performance, lashed out at those who had taken Bonds lightly. "People said I was a garbage collector," snapped the champion. "They said I had no business fighting this guy, and then when I didn't stop him, they booed. I think that was an injustice to me and to Larry Bonds. But I learned one thing: to be myself. And I learned not to believe the press when they say the other guy is a pushover."

The other winner over the weekend appeared to be Hearn. Before the fight people had descended on Syracuse. He had been offered \$4 million to fight Leonard but had turned it down. However, in their meeting at the Syracuse airport, Trainer and Steward neared agreement on a new proposal which would give Hearn a percentage of the gate.

And no one would ever suggest to Sugar Ray Leonard that Thomas Hearn is a pushover.

Bonds' ability left-handed style forced Sugar Ray to fight flat-footed and had the champ frustrated



For Bernard Bond, a 64-year-old Maryland horseman who has been training thoroughbreds for some 40 years, 1980 was a sweet ordeal. It was, as he describes it now, not only one of the most physically and mentally punishing times of his career, but also, in the end, among the most rewarding. What Bond did was this: last spring he took charge of a confused, frightened 2-year-old named Cure the Blues, a colt who apparently couldn't run a lick, and by the conclusion of the season had turned him into perhaps the fastest young racehorse in America, an undefeated juvenile regarded by many as the legitimate winter-book favorite to win this

TALK ABOUT QUICK CURES

Only a year ago Cure the Blues was considered about the slowest critter on four legs. Now the colt's the favorite for the Kentucky Derby **by WILLIAM NACK**

year's Kentucky Derby. It all happened so suddenly.

"It was amazing," Bond says. "I've never had an experience like it. Cure the Blues went from a horse that I didn't think was worth a thousand dollars to being one of the best I've ever seen. When I found out he was insured for millions, I couldn't eat. Couldn't sleep. In the morning, at the end of a two-mile gallop, he'd

rear up on his hind legs, jump and squeal and try to throw the boy off. I could hardly wait to get him off the racetrack. It was like sitting on a keg of dynamite. Fame is something. Prestige is something. Peace of mind is something else."

Now Bond has that something else. Late last fall, in an extraordinary move, he quietly told owner Bertram Firestone that it would be best if the colt were re-

In his 1981 debut last week, Cure the Blues stumbled but still won by five lengths at Hialeah

turned to the care of Firestone's regular trainer, LeRoy Jolley, for the Triple Crown campaign this spring. So, while Bond was watching over his horses at Maryland's Pimlico Race Course last week, Jolley saddled Cure the Blues at Florida's Hialeah for the colt's long-awaited first start of 1981. After stumbling to his knees at the break, the bay son of Stop the Music dashed back into the thick of it down the backstretch, tracked the pacesetter to the turn for home and then poured it on through the stretch to win by five lengths. Two days later, in the crowning race for 3-year-olds at Hialeah, Tap Shoes came from off the pace to win the \$178,000 Flamingo Stakes. But the week, so far as Triple Crown contenders were concerned, belonged to Cure the Blues.

On Flamingo Day, back home in Towson, Md., Bond was observing an anniversary of sorts. It was on that date a year ago—March 28—that Cure the Blues came to him by van from New York. Jolley periodically sends to Bond the Firestone's "culb," as Bond calls them, youngsters that do not measure up to the more promising ones in the Firestone barn. "When you're dealing with a lot of young, well-bred horses, you're going to make some mistakes," Jolley says. "Cure the Blues was obviously one of them."

The mistake was not apparent when the colt first arrived in Maryland. "The first two weeks, he couldn't beat the lead pony," Bond says. "We had a cheap filly named Rossiter. I worked them together, and she took him by 10 lengths going a half mile. I thought to myself, 'Anyone can beat this horse.' Jockey Rudy Turcotte was at the barn one morning and I said, 'Rudy, one horse can't be that slow.' But, apparently, Cure the Blues was."

What made it doubly exasperating, at least for groom Henry Borden, were the problems involved in simply getting the horse ready to train. Cure the Blues was so sensitive to anyone's fiddling with his head and ears that there were days when it took Borden an hour to put the colt's

bridle on. It was so bad, he says, that he had to take the bridle apart into three separate pieces and put it on one piece at a time. Borden, a groom for 25 years, at times was reduced to tears by the ordeal. "I chased him all over the stall," Borden says. "I got so frustrated that some mornings he made me cry trying to put the bridle on him."

"You couldn't get close to him," Bond says. "He had no confidence in people. He'd run and bite at you. If you raised your hand, he'd run to the back of his

stall and cower. He was a confused horse, like young children are sometimes confused. We couldn't gallop him. He'd try to go to the outside fence. He'd turn around. He'd rear." One morning, in fact, with Turcotte on his back, Cure the Blues reared so high that he lost his balance and flipped over backward.

"He'd do everything wrong," Bond says. "He watched everything. When a bird would fly by, he'd watch the bird. But I love to fool with 2-year-olds. One morning I put the blinkers on him."

continued



As a difficult 2-year-old, the colt reduced groom Borden to tears. Now Borden's blues are gone

CURE THE BLUES *continued*

Bond will not soon forget that morning. "Hit him on the rump two or three times coming out of the gate," he told Turcotte. With his mount wearing blinkers for the very first time—to keep his mind on his business and his eyes on the road—Turcotte gunned him out of the gate. The colt dug in and leveled out, running smoother and faster than anyone imagined he knew how. Bond watched in astonishment. "Here was a horse who couldn't go a halfmile in 52 [seconds], and he went in 46!" Bond says. "I could have dropped my watch! I said to Rudy, 'Uh-oh, we got something here.'"

Eager to find out exactly what he had, Bond entered him in a maiden race at Pimlico on April 16, only 19 days after the van ride from New York. Cure the Blues left the gate with a rush, making the lead like a scared buck, but once there he appeared to be confused, as if trying to figure what to do next. He began propping, digging in his toes to slow down, and veered toward the outside. Turcotte popped him on the side of his neck to keep him straight. As they turned for home, Rudy then smacked him hard on the rear. The colt accelerated in a burst of speed through the stretch to win by 10 lengths, in :58½ for the five-eighths of a mile.

Bond had himself a racehorse, for sure. The colt bucked his shins in that first start, but the trainer was in no hurry. Cure the Blues also came down with a

virus and, worst of all, developed a quarter crack in his right front foot. A plastic patch was screwed to the side of the hoof to hold the crack together. Meanwhile, Borden says, the colt became more tractable in his stall. Every day Bond would stop off at a local 7-11 store and buy peppermint and butterscotch candy. "Carry a piece with you at all times," Bond told Borden. "He'll come to you."

By the time the star of the Firesome stable, Genuine Risk, had won the Kentucky Derby last May, Cure the Blues had begun to settle down. Turcotte was at the stable every day to work with the colt, even if only to gallop him slowly, and often spent an hour on his back, walking him slowly to and from the track. "We babied him," Bond says. "He got confidence. If it hadn't been for Rudy, he wouldn't be half the horse he is."

By the fall, the colt could handle any 2-year-old in Maryland. He won two allowance races at Bowie easily, the first by 10 lengths and the second by seven, in a snappy 1:10 for six furlongs. Also at Bowie, he then won a division of the Marlboro Nursery Stakes by five lengths. In his last start of the year, the rich Laurel Futurity on Oct. 25, he set the pace and won off by himself, by almost seven lengths. For a colt who couldn't beat the stable pony in April, his 1980 record was arresting: five wins in five starts, by a total of 38½ lengths, and earnings of \$131,102.

It had been a taxing year for Bond, *continued*

Bond said goodby to anxious days and sleepless nights by returning Cure the Blues to Jolley



With Jolley the trainer, Vasquez is the rider



HERE'S TO GUT FEELINGS AND THOSE WHO STILL FOLLOW THEM.

Ted Turner does lots of things people advise him not to do. And he succeeds at them. He turned Atlanta's WTBS-TV into a "Superstation" using a communications satellite and recently founded Cable News Network, the world's first 24-hour TV news network. He bought the Atlanta Braves and moved them out of last place, won the 1977 America's Cup after being fired in the '74 races, and was named "Yachtsman of the Year" four times.

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one of sleepless nights and anxious days, and the hardest time was yet to come. Following the Laurel Futurity, the colt developed an infection in the quarter crack. One afternoon in mid-November, Firestone invited Bond to lunch at his Catoctin Stud in Waterford, Va., to discuss the quarter-crack problem with him and Jolley. Ever since Cure the Blues had begun to suggest that he was a classic horse, Bond had known that one day he would have to decide whether he would campaign the horse himself or give him back to Jolley. Firestone had encouraged Bond to keep the horse, telling him that he could get stalls in Florida for him over the winter.

Bond spent a good deal of time thinking about the matter. Cure the Blues was the best horse he had ever trained, his first genuine Derby prospect, and he wanted to do the right thing. By the time he arrived at the Firestone farm that afternoon, Bond had made up his mind. He was not feeling particularly well, and he decided that he would not be up to the strain of a Triple Crown campaign, with all that flying back and forth, the worries about the horse and the pressures from the media. Bond didn't care much for flying, and he didn't feel right about telling owners—those far less prominent than the Firestones—who had been with him for years that he was leaving them to hit the road.

When Firestone asked him what he planned to do, Bond said, "I think the horse belongs to someone who has been through it before. LeRoy's been through it all. I think it's best for everybody to let LeRoy have the horse."

Firestone understood. He thanked Bond for all he had done for the colt and then made him a promise: Bond would receive 10% of all the colt's winnings, just as if he were training the horse himself, and a percentage of the sum for which the colt is eventually syndicated—potentially a very lucrative commission in this day of multimillion-dollar syndications. Jolley understood, too, though he was surprised. "It was a sad thing," he says. "I felt bad for him. I didn't really know what I could do to enhance the colt. Bernie did a super job."

The task Jolley inherited will be no easy one. In his first start last week, while scrambling back to his feet at the break, the colt tore the shoe off his right front

foot, the same one that had the quarter crack last year. It remains a source of concern. The crack is healed, but the holes made when the patch was attached to the hoof have weakened the hoof wall, making it difficult to keep a shoe nailed on tight. As the hoof grows out, the holes will eventually disappear, thus eliminating the problem. Jolley is hoping that the condition won't hamper Cure the Blues unduly in his next start, in this week-end's Gotham Stakes at Aqueduct.

Borden, meanwhile, watches over the colt every day. Bond told Borden and the colt's hot-walker, Sara Townsend, that they could leave Maryland and stay with Cure the Blues if they chose to, which they did. The fates were not so kind to Turcotte. The rider followed the horse to Florida from his home in Maryland, hoping to keep the mount, but he galloped him for only a month before Jolley announced that he was replacing Turcotte with Jacinto Vasquez. Vasquez has ridden two Kentucky Derby winners for Jolley—Foolish Pleasure and Genuine Risk—and finished second with another, General Assembly. Jolley clearly feels more confident and comfortable with Vasquez. He says he hardly knows Turcotte. "I agonized over it," Jolley says.

It was a devastating blow for Turcotte. This was his big chance to emulate his older brother, Ron, who won the Triple Crown on Secretariat and the Kentucky Derby on Riva Ridge. Suddenly, in a stroke, the chance at money and fame—the chance to hit the big time in New York—was gone. Firestone told him of the change. "I felt like crying, to tell you the truth," Turcotte says.

"What's the mortgage on your house?" Firestone asked him after breaking the news.

"Forty thousand," Turcotte said. "Tell you what," Firestone said. "If he wins any of the Triple Crown races, I'll pay it off for you. If this horse is as good as I think he is, there'll be enough for everybody." Turcotte thanked Firestone for that consolation.

Turcotte has lost none of his fondness for the colt. On the morning of Flamingo day, he stopped by the Firestone barn, chatted with the owner and then walked into the shed to the colt's stall. Cure the Blues stuck his head out the door. Turcotte kissed him on the chin. "I'll be rooting for him," he said.

END



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AND ITS COMPETITION.

MOLLY BOLIN



No one puts a higher value on girls' basketball than Iowans. A ticket to the Sweet 16s, the postseason high school tournament, is harder to come by than a ticket to the Super Bowl. Yet because of Iowa's antiquated girls' game—six-member teams are divided into three offensive and three defensive players, none of whom can cross center court or bounce the ball more than twice while dribbling—even the state's best players have little chance of making it big as pros. In fact, only one, Molly Bolin, has done so. But she is among the very best.

For two seasons the 5' 9" guard with the bouncy blonde hair has calveined the anemic Women's Basketball League both on and off the court. On the court, she's a high-scoring machine. Always has been, rarely has her season average dipped below 30 points. Off the court? Well, suffice it to say that if beauty were a stat, Molly Bolin would be in the Hall of Fame.

As the leading scorer for the now-defunct Iowa Cornets in both 1979 and '80 (16.7 and 32.8 points, respectively), Bolin took her team to the championship finals. Last season, after winning the scoring title and setting 12 WBL records, including a single-game high of 35 points, she was voted co-MVP, along with ex-New Jersey Gem Ann Meyers. That was the old two-dribble Bolin, though, the one who hoisted a thousand shots a game to earn the nickname Machine Gun Molly. Now, under the watchful gaze of Dean (the Dream) Mcminger, the coach

of her new team, the San Francisco Pioneers, the girl from the cornfields has become a knowledgeable and hardworking student, ray, disciple, of basketball and a symbol of the kind of drive that might keep the WBL alive.

For a few third-quarter minutes in her third league all-star game, in February, Bolin (it's her married name and rhymes with rollin') put on one of her typical showstopping performances, hitting seven straight long-range jumpers. She wound up 13 for 21 overall and scored a game-high 29 points to lead the West to a 125-92 victory over the East. Said Greg Williams, coach of the West and the Coastal Division's first-place Dallas Diamonds, "I don't think Iowa is much of a factor in Bolin's game anymore."

Until then, Bolin was out of shape and uncomfortable with her new team, which she joined in early January after a fling with the short-lived Ladies Professional Basketball Association. Since that all-star game, Bolin has averaged 30.3 points—including a club-record 41 against Chicago—and, with a season average of 26.8, she's just 3.2 points behind New Jersey's

Carol (the Blaze) Blazewski in the WBL scoring race. Until recently she was also the league's second-best free-throw shooter; now she's sixth at 77.6%. Unlike her peers among the women's basketball elite—Nancy Lieberman, Blazewski, et al., the playground rats as it were—Bolin wasn't weaned at the school of hard picks. In Iowa the game is delicate, almost ladylike. Go to the hoop? They shudder at the thought.

Born Monna Lea Van Venthuyssen, the fifth of six children, Molly was raised in the same two-story house her parents still occupy in Moravia (pop. 700, 60 miles southeast of Des Moines). Today the Van Venthuyssen living room has a striking motif: basketball memorabilia and empty whiskey bottles. The basketball mementos are self-explanatory, but the bottles?

Forrest Van Venthuyssen, a machinery operator, and his wife, Wanda, have made a hobby of collecting Jim Beam and antique bottles since 1966, amassing some 1,500. Various series of bottles—such as those shaped like the states—are on every living-room shelf, while the rest of the collection lines the walls

THE LADY IS A HOT SHOT

Machine Gun Molly Bolin's poster is wanted, but not just because of her madly jumper by ROY S. JOHNSON



from floor to ceiling in a room at the top of the stairs.

Molly took up basketball at the age of 12 because it was what every good little Iowa girl did. After she "accidentally" scored some 50 points in her first high school game, she was dubbed Moravia Molly and basketball became the most important thing in her life. Her high school career best was 83 points. In the last home game of her senior season the Moravia Mohawkettes lost by one point despite a 70-point performance by Molly. That defeat, combined with the fact that the Mohawkettes had failed to qualify for the Sweet 16s, was a sobering episode. "When the fans began pouring onto the court, my whole basketball life flashed before my eyes," Molly recalls. "I was like a zombie when I realized there would be no more games, no more exciting shots and, I thought, no more friends. This was the end of the world, I thought. I just lay on the locker-room floor and cried."

Her reaction wasn't totally unwarranted. There was no WBL then and not much basketball future for a girl who had never played defense or dribbled up the floor. Molly wasn't enamored of Moravia's pokey pace and wanted to use basketball as her ticket out. "There are a lot of famous people from Iowa, like Johnny Carson and Cloris Leichman," she says. "But one thing's for sure. They didn't get famous by staying in Iowa."

Molly's first escape attempt came in 1975, in the summer after graduating from high school, when she was invited to the finals of the Pan Am Trials at Central State University in Warrensburg, Mo. The Pan Am coach, Cathy Rush, who had guided Immaculata College of suburban Philadelphia to three straight AJIAW titles (1972-74), was anxious to see the girl she had heard could shoot the lights out. "She was an incredible scorer," Rush says. "But her lack of experience in the full-court game killed her. Her transition game, playing defense, filling the lanes on fast breaks—none of these things had ever been worked on." Bolin eventually lost out to the more physical, more experienced players.

Back in Iowa, Molly had two options—attending a local college or getting married and starting a family. She did both. Between two seasons at Des Moines' tiny Grandview College, she

continued



married her high school sweetheart, Denne Bolin, and subsequently had a son, Damien.

As a freshman at Grandview, Molly had scored 14.1 points a game for the 27-8 Vikings, a team that boasted several women with 30-ppg averages from high school. Then, following her marriage and the birth of Damien, she found herself, at age 19, out of the game. The realities of kitchen as home court began to depress her. "I was going berserk just being a mother, watching soaps and cooking supper," she says. "I realized that while I wasn't really unhappy, I had to have a career. But then, having been raised to never cross your husband's word, I had to have Denne's blessing." And if he had nixed the idea of her taking up basketball again? "I don't know," she says. "I probably would have played anyway."

While Bolin pondered resuming her career, Grandview was trying to get her back. "When she was out of a game," says Rod Lein, who coached Bolin her freshman season, "we didn't score. The year she missed, the team went 1-24. So I guess we didn't win either." With Damien 28 days old, Bolin took her sneaks from the closet and scored 63 points in a women's church league game. "I remember thinking, 'Whew! The baby didn't take away my jump shot,'" she says. She rejoined Grandview in 1977-78, averaging 24.6 points, and that spring received her Associate Arts degree in telecommunications with a 3.1 GPA. In June 1978



Meminger says: Molly doesn't have the type of body, the physical attributes to out-talent people

Bolin became the first woman to join the newly formed WBL when she signed a one-year contract with the Cornets for about \$6,000.

The Cornets led the WBL, in attendance for two seasons, but like 10 of the original 18 franchises, they folded. Among the reasons was owner George Nissen's \$1 million investment in *Dribble*, a movie starring Pete Maravich and featuring several Cornets, which was never released. Then there were misdirected priorities on management's part—spending money on traveling outfits (Bolin called them "green gunny sacks") while at the same time housing

players six to a room on road trips. Low salaries forced some Cornets to take moneymaking matters into their own hands. In fact, a prized relic of the late franchise is an 18"x24" black-and-white poster of Bolin, which she paid for herself, posed in a tight-fitting tank top and shorts—no doubt the league's hottest shot ever.

"People always warned me about exploitation like it was a dirty word," says Bolin. "But it's all about putting people in seats, isn't it? You don't have to look like a man, act like one or play like one in this game. And I just wanted to show that women aren't trying to be like men. If you really want to make it when you're new, you've got to grab everything you've got and go with it."

Molly says: There are a lot of famous women, but they didn't get to be famous by staying in Iowa

When the Cornets folded, Bolin became the summer's hottest free agent. As one of the few survivors of the pro hand-to-mouth early days, she was wary of the high-priced packages she was offered by some WBL clubs, knowing that if an owner went under trying to pay her, her contract was worthless. After making so little her rookie season and less than \$10,000 in 1980—paltry by other pro standards—Bolin had little faith in any of the deals. So, again, she escaped from Iowa.

The Southern California Breeze, one of six teams comprising another new women's pro league—the LPBA—draft-

ed Bolin and offered her Holly-wood and a guaranteed \$30,000. Anxious for a chance at the few national endorsements given to women basketball players (ex-WBLers Faye and Kaye Young plug a yogurt and Ann Meyers a soft drink), Bolin was an easy sell.

"What kind of endorsement do you think I could get in Iowa?" she asked. "Tractors? Manure?"

When the month-old LPBA folded last December, the Bolins' already strained relationship was aggravated. Dennie, a bricklayer since high school, hadn't worked since the previous August, when he had left his job to go west with his wife to meet with the Breeze. The team offered to find him work, but a job never materialized. "This whole thing has been very hard for him," Molly admits, "especially since all his friends are supporting their wives like they were brought up to do. I wanted to succeed so bad that it sometimes meant going over his head. But he always went along. I'm not the ideal wife, I know. And I guess I'm not what he bargained for at all."

Molly had little trouble finding WBL teams—Nebraska, Dallas, Chicago and San Francisco were the front-runners—vying for her services. Nebraska, which plays in Omaha, was close to home, but ex-Iowans don't get famous by moving there, either. And the Diamonds already had their leading lady in Lieberman. The 1-5, next-to-last-place Pioneers fired their coach on Jan. 2 and hired Meminger on Jan. 3. Bolin signed with San Francisco two days later.

If the Pioneers' progress is any indication, Bolin made a sound decision. With Meminger teaching fundamentals, these folks aren't playing women's basketball, just basketball. "Dean will raise the level of the women's game," says one of his players. "It's important to him to form a team people will pay to see."

Under Meminger's tutelage, Bolin is unveiling some smooth new moves that are worth the price of admission. She sets up at the top of the key and, as the rest of the Pioneers clear out, throws in a few theatrics—a head and shoulder fake or two. Then, with her defender off balance, she can easily fire her trademark bombs. And when the opponents apply



Molly says: You should grab everything you've got and go with it.

full-court pressure, Bolin is often called upon to weave the ball upcourt, a move most Iowa girls only dream of.

"Her first year in the league all she could do was go right," says the Diamonds' Williams. "Last year I think she was the most improved player in the league. She could go left and was playing some D that most people overlooked. Now what Dean's done with her is amazing. She's a player much of the league could learn from."

Bolin is as amazed at her improvement

as anyone and, as a result, she's constantly quizzing Meminger on a new stance or move. In restaurants, airports or parking lots, there are always questions. They make an odd duo—the black coach and his blonde starlet—but she's his pet project and he her mentor. "All I know," says the pupil, "is that I'm scoring the same points with 10 fewer shots a game and half the effort. Now I'm proudest of the fact that I can dribble. I used to lose control and almost fall on my face."

With Bolin and Meminger, the Pioneers are stumbling less these days, too. "This team doesn't reflect Dean Meminger yet," says the coach. "Until we get the rest of the pieces, I'm just going to play with the puzzle and not worry about the whole picture."

No matter what, that picture will include Bolin. There are better percentage shooters in the league than Molly (44.4%), but from long range, Bolin is the best. "Molly doesn't have the type of body, the physical attributes to out-talent people," says Meminger. "But she's got the smarts to know that with a little hard work, she'll be around as long as there's a league to play in." Which isn't bad at all for a girl from the cornfields who cried on the locker-room floor thinking that Moravia was the end of the world.

END

Molly, back on the court 28 days after Damien's birth, says: The baby didn't take away my jump shot.





English Batsman Gower prudently removes his head from the path of one of Croft's "bumpers"

Leaves from a souvenir cricket album, a potpourri of memories of that most sporting, most gentlemanly of games:

Port of Spain, Trinidad, February 1981: The national side of England is scheduled to play the West Indies in the first of a five-match series. The backdrop is idyllic: the green mountains of the Northern Range and the branchy saman trees that divide the toylike stands, some fretworked in the Victorian style. From those quaint bleachers, at 11:20 a.m., an empty rum bottle comes whistling through the air, signaling the first riot of the new season.

Jammu, northern India, February 1981: A mob of 3,000 burns down the main gates of the stadium and, hurling stones, besieges the visiting team for five hours in its locker room. The visitors are women from England, there to play a side from the Indian Women's Cricket Association.

Melbourne, Australia, January 1981: On the last ball of a New Zealand vs. Australia game, the New Zealander at bat must hit a six—the equivalent of a home run—to tie the game. He's given no chance. The Australian captain, Greg Chappell, tells his brother Trevor to "bowl a grubber," i.e., to underhand an unlovable ball along the ground to the batsman instead of making a proper over-arm delivery.

It was legal, it seemed, but the cheapness of the play almost caused a severing of diplomatic relations. Aussies have an underarm problem, declaimed T-shirts sported by New Zealanders, as their prime minister, Robert Muldoon, raged. "The most disgusting effort I can recall in the history of cricket... the Australian team was as yellow as the uniforms it played in." To which Australia's prime minister could only reply, diminishing, "Uh, a serious mistake."

"Ah, well," as they might say in the Members' Pavilion at Lord's Cricket Ground in London, the shrine of the sport.

"these hot climates, you know. These colonials..."

Just a moment, please.

The Members' Pavilion, Lord's Cricket Ground, summer 1979: It's a most prestigious occasion, England vs. Australia in the Centennial Match, marking 100 years of such contests. The game has been delayed by rain and the two umpires, Dicky Bird and David Constant, a greatly respected pair, have been out to inspect the wet field. Not ready yet, they conclude, and return to the Pavilion—where, waiting for them as in ambush, is a group of Members, badged and blazered, wearing their exclusive neckties of broad yellow and orange stripes. Clearly they have been drinking in the bar for some time. They have become increasingly angry over the delay, and now, yelling profanities, they grab the umpires by their collars, manhandle and abuse them. To traditionalists, it was sacrilege.

"A game that was once played by gentlemen," the New Zealand Prime Minister mourned after the Melbourne incident, and he was right if he was referring to the two or three decades, in that golden playtime of the West which ended

with World War I, when the standards of the British public (i.e., prep) school prevailed, when such expressions as "It's not cricket" were coined. He was right also if he meant that the sport has become more win-at-all-costs, more physically intimidating, more likely to provoke violence, even among its fans.

At cricket grounds all over the world you will hear old hands opine that the sport, or the sport that they loved, was, after protracted illness, finally killed in 1977 by an Australian named Kerry Packer. Until then, cricket had been the sole administrative province of some of the most conservative elder sportsmen in the world, the spiritual kin, if you like, of the late International Olympic Committee president, Avery Brundage.

Theirs was voluntary work, and it often seemed as if they expected the players to perform on the same basis. Cricketers were the worst-paid professionals in any major sport anywhere.

Enter Packer, a TV and publishing entrepreneur, smarting with anger because the elders had refused him permission to telecast an England/Australia series over his popular Channel Nine in Sydney. Packer, who had something of the reputation of a business desperado—he was known to his enemies as the Man in the Stocking Mask—decided there was just one thing for him to do. He would buy cricket.

It was a wildly successful notion. Most of the best pro players flocked to Packer's new World Series Cricket organization, paying little heed to threats of excommunication by the governing bodies of the sport, whose members came closer still to apoplexy when Packer dressed the players in uniforms of red, yellow and blue instead of the traditional white, played games under lights, used a white instead of a red ball and made other unspeakable commercial innovations.

For a time, international cricket was in chaos. There continued

THIS ISN'T CRICKET... BUT IT IS

Unseemly behavior, on the pitch and off, mars the old game all over the world now, as an English tour of the West Indies made clear

by CLIVE GAMMON

were two English sides, one official, one outlaw; two teams of West Indians: two representing Australia. And, mostly, the class players were with the pirates. The civil war went on for two years, ending in 1979 when Packer triumphantly accepted the now professed TV rights and handed the players and the game back to the Old Guard. But things were never the same again. No penalties were imposed on the rebel pros and, what is more, they now knew their worth. Under Packer salaries went, if not sky-high—maybe a dozen or so of the top players now make \$250,000 a year—high enough to make pure sportsmanship a little outmoded, especially when bonuses for wins and for man-of-the-match awards are on the line.

And no cricketers were as strongly influenced by the Packer revolution as those of the West Indies, the group of English-speaking Caribbean-island countries stretching from Jamaica down to Trinidad which turned down political union after independence came in the 1950s but which stayed together as a cricketing unit.

Their islands may be prettier than the South Bronx or North Philadelphia, but the fastest road out of poverty heads the same way in Antigua or Barbados as it does in the black enclaves of U.S. cities—via sport, which means cricket to West Indian kids. And, just as black players in America have come to dominate basketball, so Jamaicans, Trinidadians et al

have become the world's best cricketers, the culmination of a trend which began shortly after World War II.

On the eve of last month's England-West Indies game at Port of Spain, the trainer of the West Indies team, an Australian named Dennis Waugh, threw a little light on what the cricket correspondent of the London *Observer* had to say in his preview of the match. "England's batsmen," wrote the *Observer* man, recalling a famous 1879 bottle, "view the prospect [of playing the West Indies] with no more relish than the defenders of Rorke's Drift eyed the approaching Zulu hordes."

The horde, in fact, numbered four, the West Indian quartet of fast bowlers (as opposed to spin bowlers with slower, trickier pitches) who send the ball down at 90 mph and more, and of whom Waugh said, "There's bigger money for them now. This is a tougher game. Their aggression comes up. They might not like the batsman, so they try to bounce a few around his head. And that ball is like a rock, and it hurts."

Nobody was denying that, least of all Geoff Boycott, England's most experienced batsman, who, like many cricketers nowadays, wears a hard helmet, a plexiglass visor and heavy padding under his clothing, along with the traditional leg pads and gloves.

"It's frightening," Boycott said, "and anyone who says anything else is stupid

Imagine standing on the central divider of a freeway and every few moments stepping into the fast lane. If the first three missiles don't get you, the fourth one will."

On the first morning of the Port of Spain game, though, such ordeals for the Englishmen were postponed for a while for reasons that, to a stranger, took some time to become apparent, though there had been clues enough painted on the wall outside the stadium.

The Trinidadian talent for Calypso is well known, less so the islanders' talent for incisive, literate graffiti. Among such timeless adulations as "Nationalize the Holiday Inn" and "Taximen, blood will flow unless fares go low," there had appeared more mysterious ones, like "Dem Selectors must be sick. Deryk is best to keep wicket."

Minimal research interpreted this. The selectors had picked David Murray (of Barbados) instead of Deryk Murray (no kin and hailing from Port of Spain) to play as wicketkeeper (or shortstop) on the West Indies team. Local boy misses out. It didn't seem that sinister.

Not that it is, until the first morning of play when, instead of starting the game, the umpires seemed to be spending an inordinate amount of time inspecting the field. Meantime, the fans were drinking a little rum, getting a little respite. An hour after the advertised starting time, the first bottle flew.

"Not one of the great riots," said an old hand of international cricket as bottles continued to whiz. "Remember Guyana, '79, with the stand on fire?"

"Remember Alston here in Port of Spain?" said another.

It was an old, well-loved story among the veterans. Rex Alston, possessor of the kind of juicy upper-class British accent heard less frequently on the BBC these days, was giving a radio commentary when some crowd trouble broke out. Blissfully oblivious that half the fans were carrying transistors, he described with disdain what the despicable, rum-soaked ruffians were up to. The commentary box at that time was a rickety wooden booth detached from the press box, and Alston continued speaking for some minutes—until he smelled smoke. His flight from the burning box and the enraged crowd is now part of the history of cricket.

No fires this time, only three arrests and only 65 white-helmeted cops from the Guard and Emergency Squad at



A right good fan from England, complete with Marylebone Cricket Club tie, turned up in Trinidad

St. James' Barracks deployed. Big trouble was averted, just in time for the umpires to announce that play, after all, would commence, though both Clive Lloyd, captain of the West Indies, and Ian Botham, captain of England, had declared their reluctance to start because of the state of the field.

It should be pointed out here to those unfamiliar with cricket that the ball is delivered so that it hits the ground short of the batsman, who plays it on the bounce. It's therefore highly important that the 22-yard strip of ground between batsman and bowler be as "true," as level as possible. And on this occasion it was far from that.

Eventually, reluctantly, the authorities revealed that the previous night the security guards had been unaccountably absent and the floodlights unaccountably switched off. Some local chauvinists, angered by their hero's omission from the West Indian team, had slashed the strips there to protect the central strip from overnight rain. Then with machetes, holes had been hacked where they'd do the most damage at the bowler's run-up and where the batsman would stand to play the ball. All that could be done was to fill the holes with mud and hope the sun would dry it out. A sabotaged cricket field—where else but in the West Indies would you find such an act of desecration?

Well, in England, actually, in 1975, on the eve of the last day of a vital game against Australia, with England poised to win. There the saboteurs not only dug holes but filled them with asphalt, on behalf of a London cabbie named George Davis, who was serving a 20-year sentence for robbery and wounding a policeman.

The Justice for Davis Group is what they called themselves, claiming he had been wrongly imprisoned. Influenced no doubt by the thought that no Englishman would deliberately wreck a cricket ground and thereby prevent a victory over the Aussies without the most desperately sincere motives, the courts eventually let Davis go free, a happy ending which he swiftly fouled up by immediately going off on another caper and getting caught in the act.

In Port of Spain, though, no one had used asphalt, and three and a half hours late, play commenced. England won the toss and put the West Indies in to bat, a reversal of normal procedure. *continued*



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Vicious and helter-skelter, Boycott is set to bat.



... against Croft, who looses his 100-mph pitches from 60 feet away

Normally, there are advantages in batting first, but Botham had the state of the ground in mind. It could possibly improve but hardly get worse, and no batsman in the world would opt to face the attack of the four West Indian fast bowlers in conditions that would let the ball play all kinds of tricks.

England's fast bowlers, though, were nothing like as ferocious, and through what was left of that day and all the next, the West Indian batsmen hammered the toiling bowlers, for 426 runs, a daunting total to match even against ordinary bowlers—an impossible one, so it looked, against the West Indian four.

"If the first three missiles don't get you, the fourth one will," Boycott had said. That missile, the ball, is red, made of leather and has a raised seam. It's a little smaller than a baseball and a little heavier, and this is how Colin Croft, currently the fastest of the quartet, handles it. To begin with, the batsman watches him walk away from his point of delivery, pacing out the 60 or 70 feet of

his run-up, spitting on the ball, rubbing it on his white pants so that they soon develop a red patch, fingering the hollow of his throat, or his hairline, to pick up sweat to add to the shine of the ball—all legal in cricket.

Turning, he begins his run-in, no sprint but a bounding, accelerating build-up such as a long-jumper uses, until at the peak of his rhythm, 20 yards from the batsman, his arm, straight from wrist to shoulder, swings over and releases the ball. The ball's speed, close to 100 mph at times, derives from both the bodily momentum and the armswing.

In the stand watching Croft, awaiting his turn at bat at the beginning of England's first innings, is young David Gower. With his blond curls he could be straight out of an old-fashioned boys' adven-

ture story. "It gets fearsome," he says frankly, "when they [the West Indian bowlers] start whistling them around your ears. You know, it gets your nerves going. You have to be, uh, sharp, to deal with it. You have to be ready to get out of the way. People say, just watch the ball, but I'm not entirely sure about that. It's not that easy."

"Your bat," he goes on, essaying a nervous joke: "Is your insurance. You have to keep it up."

In his short career as an international player, Gower's insurance has failed to pay off more than once. He has been hit on the neck, has had his eyebrows cut and stitched like a boxer's, his nose displaced. "Only kept me out a week," he says of the nose injury, just like the hero in a boy's story. Except that his sport is now evolving into something hardly suitable for such fiction. What is at the back of his mind, of all the English batsmen's minds, is the thought of dealing with the West Indians' bumpers. A cozy name, but an uncanny phenomenon.

Like baseball, cricket is essentially a duel between a man with a ball and one with a bat, cricket differing in that the bowler's (pitcher's) basic aim is to knock down the wicket the batsman defends, the castle, as they call it, the three wooden stumps topped with a wooden cross-piece called the bails. Additionally, the bowler can induce the batsman to give a clean catch, and there are one or two more esoteric ways of getting him out.

But in cricket these days there are times when such aims seem secondary, when the purpose of the fast bowler seems to be physical intimidation of the batsman, to put it at its mildest. English and Australian players go in for it as much as the West Indians do—and indeed you can trace the evolution of the technique back to the '30s, when the English bowler Harold Larwood tried something like it in Australia and caused an international row. Currently, though, Croft, the towering—6' 8"—Joel Garner, Andy Roberts and Mike Holding, the West Indian foursome, are the world's masters at what is known as the bumper, or, sometimes, bouncer.

In normal play the bowler endeavors to cause the ball to hit the ground as close in front of the batsman as possible, which gives the greatest chance of breaking his wicket or causing him to make an ill-judged shot. The bumper, though, is deliberately pitched short. It hits

continued



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the ground at high speed and flies at the batsman's head.

Naturally, not every delivery is a bumper, but the point of the bumper is to frighten the batsman standing out there in the fast lane of the freeway, and by the work on his nerves so that the next conventional ball may get him out.

Against England this day in Port of Spain, it works all too well. Only Gower shows much resistance, and by the end of the day Croft has taken half the side's wickets. CROFT BREAKS ENGLAND'S RACK was the headline next day in the *Trinidad Guardian*, and the Calypsonians were already spreading his praise. Sang Trinidad Crusoe

"It was England versus the West Indies/ Under Trinidad sun and tropical breeze/ But you cannot stop West Indies cricket/ Colin Croft alone took five wicket."

Like many boxers with tough reputations, Croft turned out to be a man who, when not going about his mean business, is articulate and friendly, and anxious to justify himself. He's from Guyana but has lately emigrated to Baldwin, N.Y., where none of his neighbors in that Long Island community is aware—not are those of his mother-in-law in Brooklyn, where he spends much of his time—that they are harboring the fastest, hardest bowler in the world.

"I play cricket, I get men out," he said simply. "The best way to get them out is to be aggressive. It is my weapon. The umpires are in there to judge about aggression. If they allow it, what can I do about it?" The logic is unassailable.

Next day Croft and Holding, Garner and Roberts again went through the English side like a fiery wind. There was no necessity for the West Indians to bat again. They had won, in cricket parlance, by an innings and 79 runs.

The humiliation behind them, the English team headed for Guyana, and the second game in the series. It was possible, but not likely, that they could draw level. They had an injured player who was flown home and a substitute, Robin Jackman, was sent out to replace him. Maybe this would change England's luck.

There was another way for England to swing fortune around and make cricketing history, too, a lot of people had been saying. That was to give a place on the national team to a 27-year-old batsman from the town of Steevenage, just north of London, named Roland Butcher.

Butcher is black, a Barbadian who left his island behind in 1967 as a boy of 13, one of hundreds of thousands of West Indians who emigrated to England after World War II. He had played pro cricket



Butcher and his baseball glove earned a niche in cricket history

et with the London side, Middlesex, since 1974, but not until 1980 did he blossom into a fluent batsman hitting high scores. As such he had been noticed by the English selection committee, which had included him in the party of 16 players to travel to the West Indies.

Being in the party was one thing. Actually starting on the team in an international match was quite another. Butcher had been left out of the Trinidad game and hence Port of Spain would not witness the historic first appearance of a black cricketer wearing the badge of England's international team, which shows the victorious St. George standing over the slain dragon.

There were also those who felt apprehension for Butcher. In the wrong mood and with rum aboard, a volatile West In-

dian crowd might smell a betrayal in his appearance on the English side.

At first, his non-selection was the target of criticism. "Hey, why don't you pick de black boy, mon?" was a common question to white fans in the crowd. On the second day, though, Butcher came on as a fielding substitute—that didn't make him a full-fledged England player; you have to start for that honor—and the Trinidadians gave him a taste of what to expect. "Butcher, Butcher, double-cross-sah!" they chanted.

"I have spent more than half my life in England, and my family and future are there," Butcher had said before leaving on the tour. But it seemed likely that until the English caravan reached his native Barbados, where pride in the achievement of the poor boy from East Point was likely to outweigh racial animosity, Butcher was going to be under much stress.

Any hopes, though, that he might gain national honors in Georgetown, Guyana were swiftly squashed. A Jamaican sportswriter recalled that Jackman, the replacement bowler, had spent the last several winters coaching in South Africa. He informed the Guyanese authorities, and within hours Jackman was served with a deportation order.

Declaring that they wouldn't play without him, the England team canceled the Georgetown game and headed back to Trinidad and then Barbados for the third match of the series. Would they be welcome there with Jackman on the team? And, later, in Antigua and Jamaica?

A political solution was patched together. The tour went on, just so that the English side could be flattened again by the fearsome foursome of West Indian bowlers. There was one small happy event, though. Despite being on the losing side and hardly covering himself with glory in Barbados, Butcher started for England and may now call that St. George badge his own. He had also found a place in cricket history.

But ominous chapters in that history continue to be written. The English couldn't be blamed if they should be tempted to switch to a nice, quiet, sporting, gentlemanly game like baseball. **END**



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"There's a correlation between pulling 'em out and knocking 'em out," says Herb Odom, a dentist and, at 48, a reborn boxer *by DOUGLAS S. LOONEY*

HE'S LIVING A FANTASY

Youth is not a time of life; it is a state of mind. Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul

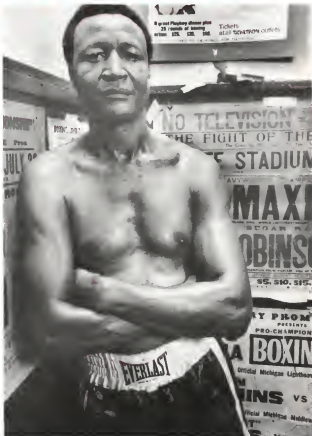
—SAMUEL ULLMAN

Herb Odom, a devotee of the sayings of the obscure aphorist cited here, has a soul less wrinkled than most. Unwrinkled? It's permanent-press. Indeed, absolutely, positively nothing dilutes Odom's conviction that he can do anything. "He is," says a friend, "the perfect example of what a person can be if he tries."

Odom, a dentist on Chicago's South Side, is wealthy going on rich. "A lot of people are millionaires," he says over a tall carrot juice while admiring the view of the Chicago skyline to the north and Lake Michigan to the east from the windows of his 14th-floor condominium. "Me? I'm a millionaire only if you figure it just right."

And Odom figures everything just right. He has had to Ever since his boyhood in Flint, Mich., where he slept on a wooden pallet in front of a coal-burning stove to keep warm in winter. And the time when Michigan State wouldn't let Odom enroll because of a few technicalities—among them, the fact that he couldn't read—and he had to figure a way to get in. And the time when he asked for a letter of recommendation to help him get into the Meharry Medical College dental school in Nashville and the Michigan State president, John A. Hannah, wrote, "This young

continued



Although accustomed to opulence, Doc "D" also finds joy in the Windy City Gym's seedy premises.



Odom says that in his younger days he moonlighted as a dentist somewhat in advance of certification

man's overall academic record is not outstanding."

In sum, seemingly every time Herb Odom has set out to do something, somebody has been right there telling him no, get lost, it can't be done, you can't do it, it doesn't make sense.

Which brings us to Herb Odom, 1981: dentist, investor, real-estate entrepreneur, civic leader, poet, painter, man-about-town, grandfather—and professional boxer. A fighter at the age of 48? Most boxers are old at 30 and wizened at 35, but if youth is a state of mind, why not? After all, Odom was the NCAA welterweight boxing champ while he was at Michigan State in 1954 and '55—his record was 29-2-1—so all he's doing is making a comeback. Never mind that 26 years have intervened between then and now. Fighting at 147 pounds, he so far has had three professional four-round bouts and has won them easily, two by knockouts. Larry Puchta of Minneapolis was the opponent who survived four rounds with Odom. He says of their bout, "I have never been hit harder than by Doc. It felt like he was hitting me with bricks. I've never enjoyed a fight less."

Naturally, Doc plans to fight a lot and eventually get himself a championship bout. Naturally, everybody tells him it can't be done. People who should know, like Angelo Dundee, the manager and trainer of WBC welterweight champion

Sugar Ray Leonard. Does Dundee have any advice for Odom? "Sure. He should forget it. It's dangerous and it's crazy."

But Odom says he could stay in the ring with Leonard. Dundee agrees. "Sure, he can work the corner with me."

Ah, yes, derision. Counters Odom. "Leonard would be scared of the embarrassment. I knew they'd just try to laugh me off." In point of fact, Doc "O"—as the fight posters bill him—fought a four-round exhibition with Tommy Hearn last September and will tell anyone within earshot how he bloodied the WBA welterweight champion's nose. Emanuel Steward, manager and trainer of Hearn, does give Odom a pat: "He's a good fundamental fighter and better than a lot of them."

But isn't Doc too old to fight?

"Yup."

You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt, as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear, as young as your hope

—LEEMAN

Driving over to the Windy City Gym in his silver 1981 Cadillac and wearing his Black Diamond mink coat to blunt the wind roaring off Lake Michigan, Odom explains his quixotic venture. "I'm not trying to prove anything," he insists. "I'm just living a fantasy. And if you have the opportunity to live a fantasy and let it

slip by, that's painful." Therein lies the truth about Odom. It's a fantasy now being lived out after half a lifetime spent wrestling with crushing realities.

At the old gym, up the rickety and worn stairs above Select Grocery, Cedric McEwen, 20, has just gone three rounds with Doc "O" and is awash in sweat. "I feel a little funny that I can't hit such an old guy," he says. "I should dust him pff, but it's like he's 19. You got to be in some kind of shape to box him. I tell you, he ain't no chump."

Because Odom went to college when he should have been working hard on a boxing career, because he went to dental school when his boxing career should have been flourishing, and because he opened his practice when his boxing career should have been in full flower, Doc "O" is only making up for opportunities missed. "I swear that I don't feel any different than I did at 25," he says.

To understand where Odom thinks he's going, it's instructive to know where he has been. Growing up poor, down but not out, in Flint, he was fortunate to have a father who went to work every day on an auto assembly line. More important, he had a father who taught him crucial lessons about living, like never start a fight or run from one.

Driving through Chicago streets—Odom always seems to be driving through Chicago streets, on the way to yet another appointment—he puts a dollar in a companion's hand. "Close your fist," he instructs. "Now look at you. You won't lose that dollar, but you're not going to get anything else either without opening that fist. My father taught me that." Indeed, it is often the case that a man's reach should exceed his grasp, so if Odom dreams of championship fights, is that folly? Or bad? When Odom had his first fight, he was a 16-year-old in Flint. And when he climbed into the ring—5'11", 109 pounds, size 11½ AAA shoes—"people laughed." More derision. Michigan State wanted Odom to box for it. Three times he took the entrance test, three times he failed to measure up. "I cried," says Odom. "I'd look at myself in the mirror and say, 'You can't go to Michigan State because you're too damn dumb.'" It was suggested he go to a junior college for brightening up. Odom wanted Michigan State or nothing. Finally it was agreed he could get in if he took nine hours in summer school and earned a C average. So he arrived in East Lan-

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sing carrying everything he owned in two cardboard boxes. He had a C average. Exactly. The athletic department wanted him to major in physics, the traditional hiding place for dummies. No, said Odom, he would major in chemistry and become a dentist. He did terribly for a while, finally attaining a grade average that might charitably be described as mediocre.

People looked at Odom back then and called him stupid. They had their reasons. After all, he admits that to this day he has never read an entire book because he reads so slowly. A speed-reading course helped; he now reads 75 words a minute. An average reader can handle 250 words a minute. But Doc "O" isn't a dope. He simply has a perception problem. To learn something, he must write it down, "because then it seems like I'm writing it on my brain." His determination is obviously off the charts. So when he talks about writing a novel, why not? He writes faster than he reads.

No dental school wanted Odom, but Meharry finally took him. Predictably, he did poorly at first. But because demonstration is more important than books for a lot of dentistry, Odom watched carefully. He was so fast and so good at working on the instructional wax teeth that he became known as "The Tooler." He slept so little (three hours a night, now five) that his roommate, Mason A. Nelson Jr. who is now on the Meharry staff, says, "I never saw him in bed."

Abruptly, in the second quarter of his second year at Meharry, Odom was notified that if he failed to come up with \$815 in past-due tuition in two days, he'd be kicked out. He begged on the streets. He talked his way in to see the late John Cain of the Cain-Sloan department store in Nashville; he convinced Cain that he was honest. Cain gave him \$200—and another \$200 a day later when the nervy Odom returned and said he was still that much short.

During the summers, Odom continued scuffling to make a buck. He'd spar for \$3 a round in Chicago. He talked a dentist into lending him his office at night for "research." In truth, Odom handed out cards, hustled patients and played dentist for real money.

Odom graduated from Meharry and opened a proper office in Chicago in 1962, but he was so poor he slept at night in his dental chair and took showers at the YMCA. But he was a shameless promoter. He'd go to a different place for

lunch each day and meet a new person, i.e., new patient. He boasted then and does now that he is painless. "I take that cold, raw needle and, pop, no pain." He insists on proving it to a skeptical visitor. Pop, no pain.

Back in those desperate days, Odom would tell himself each morning, "Hey, you're Dr. Herbert Odom and you're going to make a lot of money." Today he grouches, "People seem to act like it's a bad thing to be rich. Why can't you make money and have fun and do good?"

Recently, Odom put \$450,000 of his own money into a \$6.3 million nursing home he is building—despite continuing difficulties—on Chicago's South Side. Previously he funded a \$450,000 medical facility that houses offices, including his own.

Odom earned an MBA from the University of Chicago in 1977. Still a painfully slow reader, he put key words on flash cards—like "debit" and "credit"—and committed them and their definitions to memory. Why did he do this? Well, for one thing, he's on the board of directors of Independence Bank, and, as he says, "I didn't know what they were talking about. I just had to know more." Now he's learning Spanish because of Chicago's large Hispanic population. Says Odom, "I think it's an insult and shows great

continued

A child of the Depression, Odom now possesses a mink, a condo, the love of Debra Nichols and a 3-0 professional record as a welterweight.



lazziness not to be able to converse in someone's language."

By comparison with what went before, then, perhaps making it as a boxer at 48 is a challenge of lesser magnitude.

Why do they keep saying

That he's too old?

Have they looked at his body?

Have they checked out his soul?

—TEDDY THOMAS

From the song "Doc," *The Renaissance Man*

When the man with the unwrinkled soul applied for a boxing license in 1979, Paul Patterson, chairman of the Illinois State Athletic Board, sent him a brief letter denying the application, because of his age. "This action is being taken in your best interest and in the best interest of boxing," Patterson wrote. Odom asked, insisted, really, that Patterson at least give him a look. Patterson did. What he saw that Sunday afternoon was Doc "O" running five miles, sparring six rounds, going six rounds on a heavy bag, three more rounds on a jumbo bag, three rounds on a speed bag, doing three rounds of jumping rope and then ending up with 100 sit-ups. Said a stunned Patterson, "We got ourselves a 46-year-old boxer." Odom is the oldest man ever to be given an Illinois boxing license.

A caddy, catching bits of Odom's conversation, asks, "Are you a boxer?"

"No, I'm a dentist."

"Oh, yeah, you're the Fightin' Dentist."

"Well, there is a correlation between knocking 'em out and pulling 'em out."

All sorts of people now recognize Doc "O." He has become a kind of symbol in Chicago of how high the human spirit can soar despite ever-present wing clippers. One of Odom's large circle of friends, Thomas King, general manager of the Merchandise Mart and the Apparel Center, who happens to be a Samuel Ullman admirer himself, says, "Herb Odom has to extend himself or he won't

be fulfilled." Clarence Griffin, owner of the Windy City Gym, and Odom's trainer, told the dentist when he first walked in, "I sure would have liked to have had you 20 years ago."

Said Odom, "Don't worry. You got me now."

Nick Kerasiotis of the Illinois Athletic Board worries that "an old boxer is like a tire that has hit a lot of ruts but keeps going. Then, suddenly, while going down a smooth highway, it blows. Fortunately, we've been able to keep our boxing senior citizens to one."

Odom's fights are small potatoes (he donates his \$100 to \$150 checks to the Windy City Gym and to charities), but he trains for each one as if a world title were being contested. He admits that before each fight "I wonder, 'Have I slipped?'" Then he proceeds to prove that he hasn't. His punches are crisp, especially his jab. More significantly, he

Seemingly, all his friends have the attitude that he has proved he can fight professionally, and they wish he would stop proving it. No chance. Odom plans to fight another bout in June.

One friend, Joseph Thomas, president of St. Bernard Hospital, says, "Somebody will run a ringer in on him who'll lace Herb's boots. He doesn't have a single friend who wants to see him fight." Thomas points out that damage to a hand or eye could impair Odom's ability to practice dentistry. Says Thomas, "What good is a one-eyed dentist? They're bad enough two-eyed. Right now he could stop and say, 'I've never been defeated as a pro fighter.'"

State Senator James C. Taylor agrees that Odom has proved his point, but is more enthusiastic about his friend continuing his ring career, saying, "He lets us old guys know we can still produce if we have to. Frankly, we think Doc has

forgotten how old he is." Doc's fiancée, Debra Nichols, 24, who was Miss Black Illinois in 1978, says, "His eyes will never get old." One thing Odom has failed at is marriage—three times. But even his ex-wives speak well of him, although Betty, No. 2, says, "He doesn't understand that you can fool Mother Nature but Father Time tells the tale."

Back in his condominium, surveying Chicago's nighttime glories, Odom mixes up another carrot juice. He talks about his paintings, his poetry, his photography. "Each time you can overcome something," he says, "it makes you bigger and stronger."

But, Herb, you don't need boxing.

"Yeah, I do. It's nice to be somebody. I don't just want to be an unidentified object out there. What I love about boxing is the victory. You just don't know how good it feels when the referee grabs your hand and raises it and the announcer shouts, 'The winner is Doc Odom.' That doesn't happen often in life."



The Fighting Dentist has KO'd two of his three opponents: his victim here is Eddie Patten.

can punch while backing up, and that's gently conceded to be one of the first skills to desert a fighter

So long as your heart receives messages of grandeur and power from the earth, so long you are young

—ULLMAN

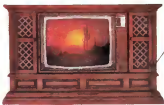
The toughest hurdle, Odom admits, is that "people put doubt in your mind."

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Long run for the money

Marathoners earned as much as a buck a step while vying for 100 grand in L.A.

Tom Fleming has always started fast. In 1979 he had Bill Rodgers by nearly a minute at 10 miles in the Boston Marathon. He came in fourth. Twice he has finished second in Boston, but always his attack was the same: as hard as he could go for as long as he lasted. "You can criticize me for no finesse," he has said, "but that's just the way I am, a tough kid from Bloomfield, New Jersey. But one of these times I'll catch that perfect peak of a day, and when I blow away from the field there'll be no catching me."

That day finally came on Sunday in the \$100,000 Jordache Los Angeles Pro-Am Marathon. Seizing an event that figured to be a curiosity, or at best a harbinger of the inevitable world of professional marathoners, Fleming left a solid field after a mile, took on a grueling course that led from the Hollywood Bowl to the Pacific—far hillier than that of any major marathon—and won by more than three minutes in 2:13:14.4. The victory was worth \$25,000 to him, thought to be the largest purse ever awarded for a marathon, above or below the table.

Fleming did it without ever looking back, without any signs of distress. Indeed, he rolled down the fearsome last mile and a half, a descent of 500 feet, to the shore beneath Pacific Palisades—"a nail-ripper of a hill," one runner called it—with his arms outstretched like a soaring bird, in relaxation, in glee, in control. "I couldn't believe how easy it was," he said later. "Even on the most wicked hills, like the one beside UCLA, my breathing never went hairy, my stomach never grabbed, my legs stayed light. It was scary. Things aren't supposed to be that way in a killer marathon."

Things were not quite so transcendental for Cindy Dalrymple or Doreen Ennis-Schwarz because they

found themselves in a pitched battle for the women's prize. Ennis-Schwarz runs up on the balls of her feet and, thus, gets severe blisters in long races. But she immediately took the lead along with Gayle Olinekova. If that name seems vaguely familiar, it's because it used to be Gayle Olinek, 12th fastest female marathoner ever, at 2:35:12, and possessor, as an SI headline (Jan. 5) put it, of the "greatest legs to ever stride the earth." She has had it lengthened—the name not the stride—to the full Ukrainian version of her grandparents.

At 10 miles, Dalrymple trailed the leaders by 150 yards. She won the 1977 Honolulu Marathon, but she's now 39, divorced, has two children and, until four months ago, had never had the luxury of

being able to train without the drain of a full-time job. She worked as a 911 Police Emergency operator in Seattle before returning to her beloved Honolulu last November. That same month she entered and won the second pro race staged by Jordache, in Pasadena, and took home \$12,500. Everything changed. "Now I can eat and sleep and train," she says. "It's exactly what I've wanted to do all my life."

After 11 miles, Olinekova dropped back with a severe nerve inflammation in her left foot. She wouldn't finish. Dalrymple sensed she was gradually closing on Ennis-Schwarz. "I seemed to be gaining on the uphill. Now I'm not at all fond of hills, but when I saw that, I kept saying, 'I hope there's another hill, and another...'"

Ennis-Schwarz was game. "But at 17," she said, "my blisters started breaking. It was hard from then on."

Dalrymple caught Ennis-Schwarz at 22 miles, not far from the house President Reagan has for sale, and pounded down the last hill to win in a personal best of 2:39:55. Ennis-Schwarz, her shoes and socks bloody, was second in 2:40:57.

The race had begun at 8 a.m. on what would remain a cool, overcast Sunday and had passed through a still nodding cross-section of Los Angeles communities, from the streetwalkers near Sunset and Vine to the elegant desertion of Beverly Hills. There were none of New York's or Boston's cheering millions. "Sure, there was a long way between people," said Dalrymple. "But there was the money to think about. I kept recalling that \$12,000 for second isn't bad, but \$25,000 will go a lot further."

There was such a sense of rightness to Dalrymple's good fortune and Fleming's pure virtuosity that it forced a closer look at this event. Was this, finally, a

continued



Tom Fleming's perfect race was good enough for a 2:13:14.4—and \$25,000

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Bill Wernington
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While the women's winner, Dalrymple, and others cashed in, Fleming seized the publicity ceremony

pro race good enough to begin a movement? Would this be the start of delivering road racers from the company of bootleggers and numbers runners and others who take their pay on the sly?

There had been a couple of previous attempts at pro racing, roads paved with good intentions that had turned distinctly hellish. Jordache had sponsored \$50,000 events last fall in Atlantic City and, as mentioned, in Pasadena, but heat and terrible organization had so scarred the races that although Dalrymple won her \$12,500 and double men's winner Ron Nabers got \$27,500, the company and the events attracted little goodwill. "If Jordache makes jeans like it puts on marathons," growled one thirsty runner after being unable to find an aid station in the Pasadena race, "you should keep a needle and thread in your pocket. Your short pocket."

But Jordache hadn't really made those marathons; it had acted only as sponsor of events organized by others. Kindly put, they were the wrong others. For the company's third event, the one it looked to as a test case for continued sponsorship, it got lucky. Michael Grandi, Olinekova's boyfriend, had been studying Los Angeles for a couple of years—and feeling embarrassed for it.

"It's such a fine running area, in terms of numbers and quality," he says, "that I was amazed it had no first-class races. Nothing like Boston or New York or At-

lanta or 20 other places. I decided that what we could contribute was a great race."

"We" were Grandi, Olinekova and a young boxing and body-building promoter named David Zelon. Together they formed a company called Sun Runners Sports Promotions and bent to such essential details as finding a route to run. "People told us you can't run down Sunset Boulevard," says Grandi. "They said, 'This is California where the car is king. You'll never get permission.' That got us more excited. But it turned out not to be hard at all. We made presentations and got clearances from the LAPD, Bel Air, West Hollywood, Westwood, the Highway Patrol. It was just that nobody had asked before. Beverly Hills took the longest. We couldn't have a refreshment station in Beverly Hills or a clock—these were ruled excessively garish displays—but we got the streets."

Zelon turned out to be a whiz at solving the complex problems of support and safety posed by a major marathon. Police protection was so thorough that in the quiet of the sleeping streets it seemed like overkill. Six hundred cops closed all the cross streets, and the runners were further guarded by 2,000 barricades and 8,000 orange cones. Grandi said he personally went from door to door along the length of the route to let people know what was going to happen. He said he gained five pounds from the snacks they

fed him, but lost two running from the guard dogs in Beverly Hills.

"So we had a race," says Grandi. "but no sponsors." There had been interest from Twentieth Century-Fox and Playboy Enterprises, but instead of a commitment there was a lot of wait-and-see talk. Grandi then remembered that Jordache had offered \$250,000 as prize money for last year's New York Marathon, only to withdraw the offer when The Athletics Congress ruled money would have to be given not directly to the runners but to their clubs. Grandi went to the giant designer jeans company, which does some \$250 million in annual sales, and found a warm reception from Chairman Joe Nakash and his brother Avi, both of whom saw no good reason why runners shouldn't have a chance to benefit from hard-won excellence. Said Avi, "I want them to know that when they're finished with amateur competition, there's a place for them to go and be rewarded."

Grandi, in fact, envisioned—and has done groundwork on—a continuing circuit of professional races. "These people have to have some kind of competitive future after sacrificing their amateur standing," he says.

In assembling his field, Grandi reached out to the six-month-old Association of Road Racing Athletes (ARRA), a remarkably cohesive runners' union that has as its goals a circuit of money races and open (meaning pro-am) competition in the Olympics and everywhere else. "The ARRA has the big names," he says, "Rodgers, Frank Shorter, Herb Lindsay, Garry Bjorklund, Ellison Goodall, Mary Decker." If ARRA had come in, Grandi would have had a coup. But it didn't. The sticking point was Jordache.

Don Kardong, a 1976 Olympic marathoner, is the present chairman of the board of ARRA. He had met in October with Jordache Executive Vice-President Paul Agner, whose gold-and-diamond neck-chain style can be disconcerting to the more subdued souls of the road. "Agner was honest about it," says Kardong. "He said if after their third marathon it was better for them promotionally to shift their money to some other attention-getter, they would."

Because of the seeming absence of a long-term commitment from Jordache, ARRA advised its members against competing in Los Angeles. "Once an athlete runs in a pro race and is declared inel-

igible as an amateur, we lose a little of our bargaining power to force The Athletics Congress and the international bodies to reform amateur rules," says Kardong. "We're holding off until we can put together a circuit good for a dozen races a year for three years."

Dalrymple had no qualms about the loss of her amateur standing (if, indeed, pros will be disqualified from amateur events; several runners theoretically tainted by the earlier Jordache runs have been welcomed into amateur races). "I'll be 42 in 1984," she says. "I figure I'd better win as much money as I can now before the really good people get in."

Her words seemed to assume a future for such races, and Joe Nakash was there in the emotional scene at the finish line to pledge just that. "We'd poured \$575,000 into these things—not just for prizes but for the whole complicated organization—and until today there were just problems for it." His face was a study in joy breaking through relief. "This is great. We're definitely going to continue. We support this kind of running not even so much for the promotion but because it's a good thing to be doing. I hope other companies will come in now. I don't want to be alone here forever." Nakash went on to say, "If the New York Marathon will allow the prize money to go straight to the athletes, then we'll renew our offer of \$250,000."

For Fleming, his \$25,000 worked out to about a dollar per footstep. But he swore that not once during the race had he so much as thought about the money. "I was just wrapped in the running," he said, sipping his first beer in seven weeks, an abstinence, coupled with his 150 miles of training every week, that had driven his weight to his adult low of 148 pounds. "People who know me will know that it isn't the reward for winning. It's the actual winning that is all I seem to care about. I'm famous for being second. How many races have I lost? We won't go into that. So you give me a day like this, a run like this, a win, and the money is just a nice surprise at the end." Obviously, pro marathoners don't sound like pro baseball players just yet. And, if Fleming is any example, they might never. He didn't show up for the publicity ceremony near the finish line at Will Rogers State Beach where Dalrymple and the other pros who finished in the money were presented with distinctly non-traditional checks. **END**

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IT'S WORTH IT.



Martina's Garden party

Nothing is tough when you're No. 3," said Martina Navratilova on the eve of her match with Andrea Jaeger last week in the finals of the Avon Championships at Madison Square Garden.

In a roundabout way Navratilova was saying that getting to the top is easier than staying there, and she ought to know. After being ranked first in the world in 1978 and '79 and getting off to a good start last year, she slipped to No. 3 in the computer rankings, behind Chris Evert Lloyd and Tracy Austin. Navratilova won 10 tournaments in 1980 but played poorly in the grand slam events, the ones that matter.

Now, three months into 1981, she's still No. 3, but her play isn't the reason. In fact, she has been the runaway leader on the winter tour, but because Evert Lloyd and Austin have been out of ac-

Though Martina Navratilova dominated the winter tour, including last week's Avon Championships, she's still No. 3

tion, Navratilova has been deprived of a chance to move up. Nonetheless, when she arrived in New York for the culmination of Avon's 10-week winter circuit, she was as relaxed and confident as she had been in a long time. She stayed at the quiet and very tony Hotel Carlyle on upper Madison Avenue, instead of at the Essex House in midtown where the other players found lodging, and she and her companion, novelist Rata Mae Brown, found time to see a Broadway show (*Amadeus*) and a movie (*La Cage aux Folles II*) during the early stages of the tournament. Navratilova lost only

This year Martina has won 26 of 30 matches but she has not yet taken on Austin or Evert Lloyd

one set in three matches en route to the final, and she felt sure that if she continued to play as well as she had, she could handle Jaeger's dogged retrieving game. It had gotten the best of her in two of three meetings earlier in the year.

Navratilova's plan was to draw Jaeger to the net whenever she could with drop shots, and then pass her as Andrea scrambled back toward the baseline. The strategy worked. Jaeger played some inspired points and made some impressive saves, but Navratilova did everything right and won the \$100,000 first prize 6-3, 7-6. At one point in the second set, as Jaeger was pounding along the baseline, pistols flying, in pursuit of a shot she had no chance of reaching, she squealed in tribute, "Oh, you're so great." Then she giggled briefly and helplessly as she came to a halt.

Great is just what Navratilova had been in the weeks leading up to the championships. She had won four of the six Avon tournaments she'd entered and 24 of 26 matches. Those victories, which constituted both a triumphant comeback and an auspicious beginning to the season, would have been even more impressive had a few more of her peers been around. Evert Lloyd sat out the winter, emerging for only the final tour stop in Boston. She won there, but not without a final-round struggle with a flu-ridden Mima Jausovec. Scratch No. 1.

Austin has been suffering from an inflamed sciatic nerve in her lower back since January. After laying off for 6½ weeks, she thought she was ready to play in Seattle on Feb. 24. Then, the morning of the day the tournament began, she reconsidered. Scratch No. 2.

Wendy Turnbull didn't play well enough to qualify for the Madison Square Garden tournament. Scratch No. 6. Evonne Goolagong Cawley is pregnant again. Scratch No. 8. Dianne Fromholtz broke her foot and spent the winter at home in the Australian summer. Scratch

continued

No. 11. Billie Jean King, now 37, had another knee operation at the end of December. So much for No. 15.

Faced with a lackluster field, Avon had the right to bump the player with the fewest qualifying points and replace her with a better gate attraction. Austin was such a wild-card choice last year, and she not only enhanced the gate but also won the tournament. Avon felt it probably could have persuaded Evert Lloyd to play this year, but in the end chose not to meddle with its own point system. As a result, Navratilova and the 15-year-old Jaeger were hardly tested before the finals. But the crowds at the Garden did get a look at the four most improved players of 1981: Barbara Potter, Leslie Allen, Bettina Bunge and Sylvia Hanika.

Potter is a 19-year-old lefthander with a lethal serve who gave Austin all she could handle at Wimbledon last year. A preppy who graduated in the top 10% of her class at the Taft School in Watertown, Conn., she has been accepted at Princeton, but she says she chose the tour because "I better do what I can while the body's able." Potter broke into the top 20 for the first time just two months before the tournament. After winning a total of only seven games in two matches (the tournament is double elimination until the semis), she was philosophical: "Nobody said it was going to be the Garden of Eden."

Allen, 24, was the media sensation of the week, just as she has been every week since she won the Avon Championships of Detroit in early February. Allen has created a stir partly because she is the first black woman since Althea Gibson to win a tournament of any significance and partly because, as a graduate in communications from USC, she's able to conduct interviews with the aplomb of a head of state.

Allen upset Hans Mandlikova 7-5, 6-1 in the first round, which was a surprise to everyone except the players who have watched Allen perform this year. "She's one of the most underrated," says Jaeger. Allen then lost 6-3, 6-0 to Navratilova and 6-1, 6-3 to Bunge (pronounced Bung-ee).



Jaeger was able to give Navratilova few hairy moments.

Like Mandlikova, Bunge, 17, looks as though she was born knowing how to play tennis. A blue-eyed, sweet-faced blonde who formerly relied primarily on a baseline game, she's now developing into an effective all-court player, but she still lacks the consistency and strength to challenge human backboards like Austin and Jaeger. Bunge, who is Swiss by birth and German by citizenship, grew up in Peru and now lives in Coral Gables, Fla. Her father, Siegfried, is in the fish meal business. "I think it is something you feed to animals," she says.

After an initial loss to Jaeger, Bunge progressed to the semifinals, where she lost 6-2, 7-5 to Navratilova. The other losing semifinalist was Hanika. Both she and Bunge are members of the West German Federation Cup team, but Hanika, 21, is a 5'8" blue-eyed blonde of a different stripe. She is an attacker with a big lefthanded serve and an even bigger persecution complex. At the conclusion of her second-round loss to Jaeger, Hanika cursed at her in German. Jaeger, who understands German, ran into the dressing room in tears. Two days later, after Hanika had lost to Jae-

ger again, her seventh loss in seven meetings, she explained her feelings. "Always when you play her you get bad calls," Hanika said. "I like her very much off the court, but on the court she's not so nice. She always tries to influence the linesmen and the umpire."

Jaeger beat Hanika not with bad calls but with phenomenal patience. Their three-set semifinal match took 2½ hours, and Jaeger prevailed the way she usually does—by keeping the ball in play and waiting for errors. "I have no patience when I do anything else," she says. "Tennis is the only thing I've got it for. I go into a restaurant with my mom and I want to order and get out of there in two seconds. I don't even think I have patience in another sport. But I'm glad tennis is the only thing I have it in. I wouldn't want to sit around and be patient my whole life. It would be sort of boring."

If Mandlikova had been on form, she, instead of Bunge, probably would have met Navratilova in the other semi. But only occasionally in recent months has Mandlikova produced the brilliant shotmaking that carried her to the finals of last year's U.S. Open. She seems tired and dispirited, as if she needs sunshine and fresh air and a little more fun in her life. Some observers think her game has lost its spontaneity. Others believe her inconsistency merely reflects lack of experience on the quick Sport-ee carpet used during the indoor season. Mandlikova says she feels no pressure to win. "I am not yet No. 1," she says. "I am No. 5, so sometimes I can still lose."

Against Hanika she won the first set 6-1 and then lost the next two 6-1, 6-0, appearing much of the time as if she could not wait to get off the court. "I look like I give up always because my style is looking very easy," she said, "but I never give up. I try every point."

This week tennis moves out of the eternal night of converted basketball arenas into the sunshine where it belongs. Things will soon return to normal. Evert Lloyd and Austin will be back, and they, along with Navratilova, will be gearing for the French Open and Wimbledon. We will then see if the world's No. 3 player is indeed playing No. 1 tennis. **AND**

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Whenever David takes on Goliath, almost everybody gets behind the little guy and hopes. Upstart versus Up-top. It's the American way. And in the classic unfolding of this tradition, the underdogs respond with a mighty effort and leave poor Goliath reeling.

Forget it. Forget happy-ending headlines, unless you find cheer in DAVID'S SLINGSHOT EMPTY. GIANT KO'S KID. Last weekend Goliath—that is, 32-0 Louisiana Tech—put its victory string on the line twice in the AIAW basketball championships in Eugene, Ore. Once versus tournament newcomer USC (Tech 66, Trojans 50). And once against last year's runner-up, Tennessee (Tech 79, Tennessee 59). "Hey, you think we came all this way to lose?" asked Tech reserve Center Debra Rodman.

Now that you mention it, no. All season long, the Lady Techsters were beating the likes of Kansas, two-time defending champion Old Dominion, UCLA and Long Beach State. And from the opening tap back on the first of December, Tech remained firmly lodged atop the rankings, in every official and unofficial poll. Is it any wonder that Coach Sonja Hogg wears a diamond-studded gold "#1" pendant around her neck?

Hogg, 35, is a no-nonsense lady, from the tip of her spike heels to the top of her lemon-meringue hair. When she arrived at Tech seven years ago to teach physical education, the women's basketball team didn't exist, and the school's main claim to fame was a balding football player by the name of Bradshaw. But a handful of interested women persuaded the university administration to give basketball a small-scale whirl, and Hogg was stuck with the job of overseeing the details. "I was new, and doesn't the new kid always get volunteered for these things?" she says.

Although Hogg herself was enthusiastic, she wasn't sure women's hoops would catch on. "I warned everyone that if it didn't go within

a year, they'd have to count me out," she says. That first season, 1974-75, playing with local talent, Tech went 13-9 and has never looked back. In 1979 the Lady Techsters made their first appearance in the final four, losing in the championship game to Old Dominion. Last year Tech once more fell to the Lady Monarchs, this time in a semifinal. And this year the Lady Techsters scored an average of 90.5 points while winning by 32.3 points a game. Unbeaten, unblemished, unbelievable.

All season long, people have been mispronouncing Sonja Hogg's name while asking, "How do they stay undefeated, Son-ya? Hey, Son-ya Hawg, what's the secret weapon?" Sonja (just as it looks) Hogg (rhymes with rogue) merely shakes her head, smiles and says, "I still don't know." No? "Well, we do have depth."

Indeed, it was Tech's depth that preserved its zero in the loss column against USC. "I think they're ripe," Trojan Coach Linda Sharp was saying on Friday morning. "I mean, 32 games? How

continued

It was a Tech-book year

Deep in talent, not to mention coaches, Louisiana Tech was simply phenomenal as it ran up a 34-0 record and won the women's national title over Tennessee



Tourney MVP Turner (left) and Irish Guard Mulvey drove the Lady Techsters to their ultimate triumphs

can anyone stay psyched for 32 games?" To aid USC's psyche, a 29-piece Trojan band—part of the bigger one which is heard at the L.A. Coliseum in the fall and which is the backup to Fleetwood Mac on that group's *Tusk* album—made the long bus trek to Eugene and played harder and louder than any band in the building. And for a while, the band seemed to work inspirational magic. The Trojan defense was shutting down All-America Center Pam Kelly, a junior who scores 17.9 points a game. "Everyone's got to have one bad game," Sharp had said before meeting Tech, her tone implying, "Please let this be it." And the rest of the Techsters weren't so sharp, either, committing turnovers galore. Ah, but depth. With Kelly in trouble, Hogg sent Rodman in and watched her score 15 points. Kam Mulkey, a petite reserve guard with a ponytail, came in to play quarterback. And suddenly Tech ran away from the Trojans.

Afterward, Mulkey stood in a drafty hallway and wondered about the Lady

Techsters. "I can't pinpoint any one thing that made us play as poorly as this," she said. "Some games during the year we were this way. And like tonight, we were lucky and we won. USC played excited, we didn't." Could it have been the pressure of being the nation's only unbeaten major college basketball team, regardless of sex? Mulkey shrugged and said, "Some people think a defeat makes you better. I don't. Maybe we didn't think much about it, but it's sure nice having that big zero there all year." Another guard, Jennifer White, spoke up, "If you're a top team you should love pressure. Coach says so. And he's right."

He? Oh yeah. Besides the abundance of talent on Tech's bench, which Sharp described as "99 deep," there's a lot of coaching ability sitting there, too. Hogg is head honcho—recruiting, leading and putting the finishing touches on game plans. Next in line is Associate Head Coach Leon Barmore, who handles the basic Xs and Os. Poor Barmore, he's a grade-B version of Bobby Knight who gets so worked up on the job he comes out of games more drained than his players. During last year's semifinals, Barmore collapsed of heat exhaustion. This year he waved his arms a lot but remained fairly perpendicular. And rounding out the Tech brain trust is the defensive coordinator and director of recruiting, Gary Blair. He coached Rodman's high school team last season when it went 40-0. His two-year coaching record stands at 73-0.

Together Hogg, Barmore and Blair guided Tech through a season that was 11 games shorter than last year's, all the better for ensuring a second wind for the second season—the national tournament. "How can you be sharp in the final four when you've played 43 games before you get there?" draws Hogg. Now she and her staff are puzzling over next season's scheduling dilemma. But it's the sort of problem any coach would gladly trade a year's supply of sweatbands for, because the Lady Techsters buried every opponent who showed up in Russon, La., no one wants to play in Tech's Memorial Gym anymore.

No wonder, seeing as how this season's entire crop will be back in 1981-82 to run its high-scoring post offense around Kelly and freshman Janice Lawrence and throw up the tough multiple defense that allowed Tech to turn even lackluster performances into wins.

"You've got to be impressed with them," says Tennessee Coach Pat Head Summitt. "Face it. They walked in here undefeated. They've beaten everybody." The last AIAW champion to finish the season undefeated had been Delta State of Cleveland, Miss., in 1975.

Even Hogg, who knew her club was loaded, admits the perfect season was a surprise. "We've got some fans back home who told me in August we'd win everything," she says. "I knew we'd have to lose one or two along the way, so frankly I thought they were out of their minds." Or maybe just slavishly devoted to Tech, perhaps because, as one fan put it, "There's really not much else to do in Russon." Last weekend about 100 Tech fans sat court-side with the band and eight cheerleaders when their team took its precious collection of victories into the final game on the University of Oregon campus. Tech had beaten Tennessee before Christmas, 77-53. "I don't see this as a chance for revenge," Head Summitt was saying before the game. "To me it's a chance to win a national championship. That's something we've never done and Tech has never done."

"No cakewalk" is how Hogg viewed Sunday's final. To counter Tennessee's strong inside game, the Techsters came out in a zone defense. "Sometimes when we use the zone, the kids stand there and watch," said Hogg afterward, "but this time we did a super job of covering their post people." Tech Forward Angela Turner continually stole the ball from the Lady Vols and at the other end of the court tossed in 16 points. Turner's name was not on the All-America list released last Saturday, which plainly peeved Hogg. (Kelly made it for the second year in a row.) Apparently, Turner's season averages of 13.4 points and 5.5 rebounds a game weren't enough for the selectors. But her aggressive style in the final four couldn't escape notice and won her tournament MVP honors.

After the game Hogg was carried to midcourt on her team's shoulders while Tech's rooters chanted, "We're un-DEE-feated." The coach grinned before saying, "We had only one goal this season, just one thing that could realistically satisfy us. We wanted to win the championship." She paused, hugging her trophy and then asked, "Who would have dared dream we'd be here with this at 34-0?"



Head honcho Hogg leaves Xs and Os to others



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Tom Weiskopf has been in 13 straight Masters, but he may miss out this year

Trying time for Big T



The path to Augusta didn't go via Hilton Head

If Terrible (or Tempestuous, Tortured) Tom Weiskopf, a/k/a Big T, is missing from the Masters Golf Tournament next week for the first time in 14 years—and that will be the case unless he was at Greensboro this week—it will somehow seem as if the wisteria has forgotten to crawl up the big oak on the Augusta National veranda. In other words, things won't be the same.

In many ways, Weiskopf has been as much a part of the Masters as Jack Nicklaus' golden locks or a bank of azaleas along a distant fairway. Augusta is one of the places, and there are many, where Weiskopf makes news whether he is seriously contending for a title or just creating a mild storm among the flora and fauna.

Until last year Weiskopf had perennially been among the favorites at Augusta because of his booming tee shots and his elegant all-round game, and he had added much to the drama of post Masters by finishing second four times and twice coming within a single putt of forcing a playoff for the green jacket. It was a rare day when Weiskopf's name was not posted on the Masters leader board. But the last three years have been relatively bad ones for him—bad compared to the glories of the past. All of the frustrations of his bumpy career seemed to come out on a single hole in the first round of the 1980 Masters—the par-3 12th, on which he made a whopping 13. Unsurprisingly, he eventually missed the cut.

For years Weiskopf had usually qualified for a return to Augusta by winding up in the top 24 in the Masters itself. When he failed in 1980, there were several other ways for him to get back. He could have finished in the top 16 at the U.S. Open; he wound up 36th. He could have finished eighth or better in the PGA Championship; he tied for 10th. That left one way—so win a golf tournament. Going into the Heritage last week on Hilton Head Island, he'd been shut out.

What would he do if he didn't make it to Augusta? "I've got a friend who says he can get me a job driving a truck for four dollars an hour," Weiskopf said.

It was the pre-1973 Weiskopf who gained for himself a lifelong reputation as a "bad boy." He was not the club-thrasher his idol Tommy Bolt was, but neither was he the leading P.R. charmer in the clubhouse. Always he spoke with honesty, no matter to whom. If he didn't like a golf course, a scorer, a ruling, a gallery marshal, a newspaper story, a tournament sponsor, he said so—and he frequently left town without leaving love letters and thank-you notes.

Then in '73 he suddenly became the greatest golfer in the world. It was a year that saw him reach his true potential, a year in which he won his one and only major championship and practically everything else. It was a year that made him rich and, at times, even mellow.

In '73 Weiskopf conquered both Troon and Johnny Miller in a brilliant head-to-head duel to win the British Open. That year he won four other tournaments on the PGA Tour, plus the old World Series of Golf, plus the South African PGA. Over an incredible stretch of 12 tournaments he never finished worse than sixth.

"That's the only time I ever really putted good," he said last week. "I'm as good a ball-striker as I ever was. In '73 I guess you can say I was looking like whatever it is that Tom Watson has become. Maybe I let up after '73. I don't know. I've never practiced much. I hate practice. But I'll tell you one thing about chasing the little white ball. Make what you want to out of it, but it's all on the greens—and half of that's in your head."

Weiskopf's head has been a subject of discussion for years. It came under its severest scrutiny in midsummer of 1979, when he hit the lowest point of his career. He had moved to Paradise Valley, Ariz. and built a home for his wife, Jeanne, and his two children that featured, among other things, seven bathrooms. He concentrated on the outdoor life, bought a six cabin and invested in a bar. Although he had moved to Arizona from Ohio for better golfing weather, he seldom practiced. He did play a social brand of tennis in long pants. "I think I thought I was retired," he says.

continued

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What started waking him up was a pitiful performance that year in the British Open. He spent most of the week around the hospitality tents, used his putter on some approach shots, missed the cut and generally behaved as if he were an entertainer and not a former holder of the championship.

Referring to Weiskopf's unorthodox use of his putter, a friend asked, "Why'd you do that, Tom?"

To which Weiskopf replied, grinning, "It's the best way to keep the ball under the wind."

Late in the afternoon on the day of the second round, he found himself sitting around drinking with a group of friends and business associates. One of the people present was Sue Barker, the tennis player. "Do you know Nastase?" Weiskopf asked her. She said she did.

Weiskopf borrowed a pen and a piece of paper and started writing something. "I love that guy, although I don't know him. He's colorful," he said, handing Barker the note. "Give him this for me," Weiskopf's note said: "Dear Nastie: Keep up the good work. Sports needs us. Sincerely, Tom Weiskopf."

As the summer of '79 wore on, Weiskopf was forced to get serious about his golf game. For the first time in years he was confronted with the very real possibility of not making the PGA Tour's Top 60, of not being an exempt player.

So he disciplined himself into going back to work, and he played in the last seven events on the tour during a time of the year when in the past he'd always gone hunting for sheep or elk or Scotch or vodka. He built his earnings for the year up to nearly \$77,000 and finished 48th, good enough to survive, but far below where he should have finished.

He improved a bit last year, inching up to 47th place with \$88,260, but Weiskopf insiders will remember 1980 as the Year of the Wig. A group of Japanese wigmakers asked him, somewhere along the way, to wear a toupee in a couple of Japanese golf tournaments. He would be paid handsomely for it, and he could certainly use the money, because his golf earnings had dropped off more drastically than his style of living.

"I didn't want to wear a rug," he said. "I made up a fantastic figure, but they said O.K. I tripled that, and they said O.K. again. They even said I didn't have to play golf in it, but just get my picture taken and then wear a cap in the tour-

Windblown bunker sand irked Weiskopf less than not being able to win in his next-to-last chance

naments so nobody could tell I didn't have it on. I put the thing on and looked at myself in the mirror and I thought about the money. You know what I did? I said forget it. It wasn't me."

Weiskopf was responsible for perhaps the best call for a ruling that ever occurred on the tour. A few years ago at the old Greater Jacksonville Open, having tried to cure a case of the flu by walking into a Drumbie cloud, Weiskopf overslept one morning, having slept a total of 30 minutes, and barely made his tee time.

His friend and fellow pro, Ed Sneed, drove him to the Deerwood course in the manner of Richard Petty at Daytona, and another friend met him on the first tee with his golf shoes. Weiskopf's tee shot on No. 1 went 60 yards before it struck a pine. His tee shot on No. 2 went into the rough. Weiskopf sat down under a tree and dealt with his nausea and asked for a ruling. Two groups played through.

Eventually, a tournament official, an old friend, came riding up on a golf cart prepared to tell Weiskopf whether or not he was entitled to a free drop from his lie. "What's the problem, Tom?" he inquired, looking at Weiskopf's golf ball.

"Listen," said Weiskopf, finding it difficult to stand up and keep his balance, "can you get me an egg sandwich?"

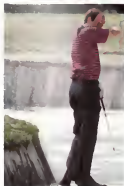
Weiskopf went on to shoot a 69 that day, having, as he does, the constitution of a rhinoceros and a fine natural golf swing. He likes to look back on it as the "greatest round a dead man ever shot."

Weiskopf will play other great rounds. He is only 38 and he may yet do all of the things he has been expected to do all these years.

But what if he never does? What if all that tremendous ability is never rewarded with an armload of major championships? How will he feel about it? The question was put to him last week at Hilton Head, where Bill Rogers, a player with less potential, was winning his second PGA tournament, and Weiskopf, the picture golfer, was finishing sixth.

"Let me answer it this way," said Big T, being nothing else than himself. "Who gives a damn?"

Well, right now, only those of us who would miss him at Augusta.







"I'VE ALWAYS FELT POWERLESS"

*Dr. J dominates the basketball court, but Julius Erving says
he has no control of his life* by **JOHN PARANEK**

JULIUS ERVING

continued

There are any number of ways to analyze results—of a moment, a career, a life. There are questions to ask and answers to question, enough whys and what-ifs to put a person through a lot of needless exercise. Or, one can go through life quite content for having tried his hardest and say, when asked, "Hey, what is, is."

Take, for example, Julius Erving, the Philadelphia 76ers' incomparable Dr. J. He sat silently in front of his locker at the Boston Garden last Sunday before the 82nd and final game of his 10th professional season, a pair of hot towels warming the springs in his knees. There were no predictions of victory from him, but neither was there any sign of uncertainty on his face or in his voice about what might happen in the big game.

"We'll see," he said. "We'll see."

Nor was there any reason for him to consider why this game was as big as it was. The winner would be champion of the NBA's Atlantic Division and receive a cherished bye in the opening round of this week's playoffs. The loser would finish second and get just one day's rest before negotiating the potential booby trap known as the best-of-three mini-series. Of course, this game would have been meaningless, the title and time off locked up, if the Sixers hadn't folded in four of their previous eight games. But what had happened, had happened. And to Erving, what is, is.

And then the 76ers stormed onto the parquet floor and lost again, 98-94. Those who had reason to expect that Dr. J would merely assume control, snoring

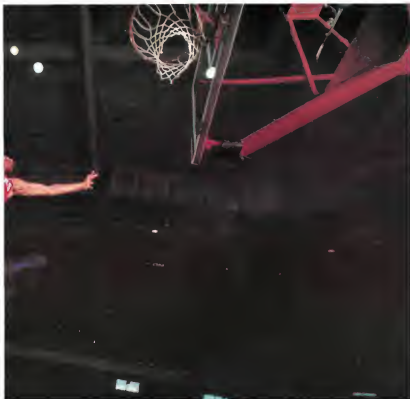
and scoring 40 points as he has so often in the clutch, were disappointed. For three quarters The Doctor was inept, missing nine of 13 shots, never once flying through the air like a cruise missile, slamming the basketball-payload through its target. A minor surge in which Erving scored three straight fourth-quarter baskets boosted his production to 19 points, 12 below his season average against the Celtics, but it only helped to make the final score respectable. This was clearly not a game in which The Doctor was in control.

But all did not go awful for the Sixers. In Indianapolis the Chicago Bulls, the most feared of the playoff dark horses, had beaten the Pacers. That meant that

the 76ers would get tamer Indiana in their mini-series, leaving the Bulls for the New York Knicks. Of course, that result, a happy one, was outside of Erving's control as well. "Thank goodness," he said, "for small favors."

If we didn't know any better, we would think that Julius Winfield Erving II is in control of things to a degree matched by few athletes. Certainly he can control his body and a basketball in ways no one before him ever thought possible. His life is ordered, he has a wife as lovely as her name, Turquoise, and three beautiful and well-behaved children, with a fourth expected in May. He carries himself with uncommon dignity and class, he handles his superstardom more graciously than





Aerial daredevil Erving brings a whole new perspective to the art of dunking a basketball because of his cartoonish hands and extraordinary leaping ability.

any of his peers. Furthermore, he controls a fledgling business empire worth a small—say, \$10 million—but growing fortune. With all this in the palms of what must be among the world's largest hands—11 inches from pinky to thumb with fingers only slightly stretched, a little longer than this page—is it too much to believe that Erving is in complete control of his world?

The key word is "control," for the good Doctor insists that nothing is without his control, a claim which sounds a trifle too modest to be true. Dr. J: he has a patent on the name in all forms. Doctor, Dr., The Doctor. The image—be it the revolutionary aerial daredevil artist; the articulate best friend of the press; the man

in the monk coat and the Mercedes; the national chairman of the Hemophilia Foundation; the coach of the Special Olympics basketball program, the adviser to The March of Dimes; the spokesman for the Lupus Foundation, American Dental Association and Philadelphia Police Athletic League; the endorser of the American Red Cross, Population Institute, Pennsylvania Adult Education and dozens of other charities; the ubiquitous television pitchman (Hey, Dr. Chap-Stick!); the devoted Christian and family man—all seems too wonderful, like the high school senior whose yearbook entry is six times as long as anyone else's.

Yet Erving insists he has no control over any of this. Not that his life has

been left to chance. Not at all. "I believe in predestination," he says, and everything that has occurred to him in his legendary life—"legendary" being the word most often associated with Dr. J—is, he believes, all part of God's master plan.

Stay with this now, for the real Julius Erving isn't as difficult to pin down as he is to believe. He is sensitive. He is vain. He is protective of an ego as big as the Ritz. Sometimes, overprotective. Sure, everyone has an ego. And the vanity? "It's part of what makes him great," says 76er Trainer Al Domenico. "He cares very much what people think—of how he plays, how he speaks, how he acts, how his children act. But he cares about his body, too. Jeez, if continued

JULIUS ERVING

continued

Doc gets a pimple, he wants to know why it's there and the fastest way to get rid of it." Of course, pimples are beyond The Doctor's control, just as The Legend is beyond his control.

If the '70ers, far and away the best regular-season team in the NBA during Erving's five years with the club, finally win the NBA championship this season after twice losing in the final round, so be it. Isn't it just coincidence that the last two times Turquoise was expecting, as she is now, Julius' team—the ABA New York Nets—won championships? If Erving, playing the best basketball of his career at age 31, as, expected, voted the NBA's Most Valuable Player, so be it. Can he help it that he would be the first non-center to be MVP since Oscar Robertson in 1964, 17 years ago? And so it was that Erving, dended as a "circus performer" by NBA chauvinists while he was winning three scoring championships and three MVP awards in the ABA, recently was one of two active players—Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was the other—elected to the 11-man All-Time NBA team.

So The Legend grows, quite beyond The Doctor's control, and it has caused

Erving and his family almost as much hurt as happiness. At times it has created jealousy among teammates, resentment from fans. It has made Turquoise "hard and outspoken," in her words, or even "unprintable," in the words of some other '70er wives, whom she has publicly accused of snubbing her and her husband because of jealousy. She guards her nest like a mother hawk, protecting her husband from those she suspects might exploit him unfairly while carefully monitoring the "normal" environment the Ervings insist upon for their children. But The Legend has produced occasional distortions of fact, as legends tend to do. Erving's mother, Mrs. Callie Mae Lindsey, says, "For the years that my son has been a superstar, my life has been filled with happiness, enjoyment, anger and misunderstanding." She bristles when this or that person claims credit for "developing" Julius, whose father left their Roosevelt, Long Island home when her "June," for June, was five. Mes. Lindsey, the eighth of 14 children of South Carolina sharecroppers, raised her three children with a firm Christian hand and "instilled in them a desire to make each day better than the one before and

to improve each task, however small."

Her famous son has clearly benefited from her teaching. That is why he is as real as he can be a superstar, yes, an idol, even. But he understands his mortality and tries to give as much as he has received. He often tries too hard, and this, he realizes, is a shortcoming. "I believe that I was given a gift," he says. "And what can be given can be taken away. I learned early that when I made a wrong decision I was punished, immediately. Conversely, doing the right thing always brought reward. So I've tried to stay on the right side of the Man, and I've been blessed."

Julius Erving's locker is mobbed with reporters after every game. He is known and loved by the media for his patience and willingness to sit for hours until the last pencil or camera or microphone has left him, whether it belongs to the networks, the locals, the visitors, a high school kid from Overbrook or a fifth-grader from Bala-Cynwyd. Not that The Doctor is a great interview. In fact, his quotes are usually downright bland, even after a game in which he might have scored 45 points with three moves that would tax a thesaurus for adjectives.

Then again, bland is better than Carlton in Philadelphia. "One of my greatest challenges," Erving says, "is to explain what I do. Most of it is repetitive to me, anyway. Did Beethoven have to explain how he wrote his Ninth Symphony?"

The other day a Philadelphia reporter interrupted his post-practice interview with Erving to chase down Coach Billy Cunningham for a quote. "Hold that cliché, Doc. I'll be right back," said the reporter.

"Right," said Erving, and he waited. Never mind that 8-year-old Cheo Erving and his 6-year-old brother, J (for Julius III), were hungry for lunch. Their father told them to wait, and wait they did, entertaining '70er Center Darryl Dawkins with a kindergarten joke about a boy who recited the alphabet and omitted the letter "p." Finally, Erving was finished and took the boys to lunch—at Wendy's. Erving has continued



Making a house call: The Doctor lounges with his children (from left: Jazman, J (for Julius III) and Cheo)



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JULIUS ERVING

continued



He's no foot doctor, but the proprietor Erving's shoe salon is a high-risk venture in high-fashion footwear

been known to be penurious, and until recently he was a Wendy's stockholder. His meal was interrupted several times for autographs and one woman asked if he really wore the Dr. J sneakers he plugs on television.

"Did you ever hear of truth in advertising?" answered Erving, ever so diplomatically.

After lunch the Erving men joined the Erving women at the modest three-bedroom Center City condominium where Julius lives during the season. Since 1976, when he was with the Nets, the family's main residence has been a 17-room Long Island manse. In season, Turk, as she is called, stays in Philadelphia and the children commute there on weekends; in September, the family will move to Philadelphia permanently, and the Erving business empire will be centralized there. Now, at the condominium, 4-year-old Jaazmin showed off two new dresses her mother had bought her that morning, then presented each boy with a new shirt. One by one each child hugged and kissed and thanked each parent, then Julius took them all to the swimming pool. If ever there was an American dream family for the '80s...

"A lot of people have tried to sepa-

rate Dr. J from Julius Erving," said the president of The Erving Group while sitting in a corner of the holding company's newest property, The Doctor's Shoe Salon, an elegant high-fashion boutique near Philadelphia's exclusive Society Hill. The NBA playoffs were just a week away, and Julius Erving, an impeccably dressed corporate president with a precise bass voice, was talking debenture bonds and risk capital. He appeared to belong in this setting: the lone incongruities were the long legs stretched over an ottoman and the hands. The hands weren't exactly resting on his thighs. The heels of the hands sat on mid-thigh, but the fingers stretched out like thick ropes and curled over the kneecaps.

Checking out a pair of loafers, a customer said to the proprietor, "Hey, you got these in blue suede?"

"Blue, black and brown," said Erving.

The Doctor was presiding over a rambling discussion, and a full 45 minutes elapsed before the word "basketball" was mentioned. The "salon" was of prime importance. Erving emphasized that it was a "salon, not a sneaker store, which is what a lot of people thought it should be. But this is something I've wanted to do for a long while. I sat with the idea

for four or five years before going ahead with it. A lot of people whose advice I listened to said it wouldn't work. But I wanted to do it. My wife wanted to do it. We wanted something that people could associate with what Dr. J was really about. Class. Quality. It's the first high-risk venture I've gone for. Before this, every investment was what you would call solid—stocks, bonds, a house. With my attitude about money, I've never been in any rush to go out and spend." Turquoise used to tell how Julius would count the change on his dresser every night before retiring and recount it in the morning when he woke up to make sure none of it had disappeared during the night.

"I'm careful," he was saying. "I'm not going to do something before I'm sure I'm ready. The important thing for me now is to establish my portfolio, and it's not going to end with one shoe store. I can see myself, at the end of my playing career, making the transition from basketball player to entrepreneur. I want it set up so I don't have to take a step down or a step up, just step off. And instead of being Dr. J on a court, I'll be in a nice office with 'J.W. Erving II' on the door."

Watching and listening to this man, one begins to get the feeling that the spectacular basketball career he has fashioned is a mere prelude to a much grander existence. He views his life as a series of choices, and he has always seemed to choose pearls over paste. He says he didn't seek out these treasures, they merely presented themselves to him. Sometimes he didn't even seem to know what he was choosing. It's all part of his belief in destiny, and one is shocked to hear an athlete of The Doctor's stature say, "I think I've always felt powerless."

He first felt that powerlessness when his brother Marvin died in 1969, while Julius was a freshman at the University of Massachusetts. Julius was the family's athlete. His siblings were inclined toward academics, art and other activities. His older sister, Alexis, now a free-lance legal secretary, was a member of the 4-H Club and Girl Scouts. Marvin, continued

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JULIUS ERVING

continued



three years younger, was president of his class and a serious drummer. Marvin idolized Julius for his athletics. Julius loved Marvin because he had qualities that Julius lacked. "I felt he would be a lawyer or a doctor," says Julius. "I was an introvert. He was an extrovert. I admired him for that."

Mrs. Lindsey remembers how Marvin insisted they pay Julius a surprise visit at the UMass campus in Amherst on his birthday, Feb. 22. "UMass had a game that night," she says, "and at halftime the spectators and the team sang Happy Birthday for Julius and I was so very proud and happy. On the way back to New York we were caught in the worst snowstorm I can remember, and the very next day Marvin began complaining that his arms and knees hurt." The condition was diagnosed as arthritis, and when Julius came home for spring break Marvin was hospitalized.

"He had always been sickly," says Julius, "so I never thought it was serious. But somehow my mother must have known because the night before I went back to school she cried and cried." No sooner did Julius get back to Amherst than he was called home again. Before he got there, Marvin died. Later, the cause of Marvin's death was diagnosed as Lupus Erythematosus, a disease in which antibodies, deadly to the body's own tissues, are produced. Now Erving has taken on the fight against Lupus as one of his life missions.

"I went to the cemetery for three straight days and cried," says Julius. "Then I stopped. I was really brought to my knees and made to feel helpless and powerless. It was like I no longer had control. I could be gone tomorrow. I felt helpless, but I also became fearless. I felt, 'Well, if I'm going to do something, I'm going to let it all hang out. If something's meant for you, then it's going to fall into place. But you have to put forth the effort and energy for it to happen. And you have to be a good person. You have to have a pure heart.'"

"I haven't cried since that day, and I'm not sure what would make me cry. Two years ago I had a favorite uncle die. My father's brother Phillip. I went to his wake and I was fully aware that I had

not cried since '69. I really loved him and I wanted to cry, but I couldn't cry. I felt people expected me to cry, so I forced tears to come into my eyes, but I can't really say I cried."

If Marvin's death was the point at which Erving gave up trying to control things, was it also the time that The Legend began? "Yes," he says, "and you know what, it was all a mystery to me. Take basketball, for example."

This is Dr. J saying, "Take basketball, for example."

"My perspective was entirely local. Our team at Roosevelt High School could have been the best in the country. In the country? But we had no idea. Our ultimate aim was to win the Nassau County championship, which we didn't. I went to UMass mainly because my high school coach, Ray Wilson, was a friend of Jack Leaman, the UMass coach. Once I got there, my perspective was regional. I never considered that I could play on the level of guys from UCLA or Purdue. It just never occurred to me. My first awakening came after my sophomore year when Mr. Leaman got me into the Olympic development camp. There I was with guys like Paul Westphal, an All-American from USC, Tom McMillen from Maryland, Jolly Wright from Indiana. Well, I led that team in scoring and rebounding and I began to think, Hmmm. Maybe. But those guys would sit around saying, 'Well, I won't sign for anything less than \$50,000 up front with a four-year no-cut at \$125,000; and I couldn't even take part in the conversation. I was completely naive about it. Pro ball? I had never considered it a reality.'"

Westphal, now with the Seattle SuperSonics, recalls that he had never heard of Julius Erving until that camp. "I was like crazy," he says now, "but my impression of him was that he was only 6' 5" or so." In fact he was more like 6' 4" and 180 pounds. "I do remember that he had some unusual abilities. I say that because he was inconsistent and real quiet. One night he would tear the place up with 35, 40 points and the next he would look like he was trying to be more flashy than he had to be. He was very good, however, at learning what he could do and he started playing without throwing on mustard at the expense of the shot."

In Erving's junior year at UMass, the name "Erving, Julius" began continued

Dr. J's many moves around the hoop make him the "Bird" top scorer and the NBA's highest MVP.

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JULIUS ERVING

continued

to appear on the Top 10 NCAA scoring stats. He averaged almost 27 points and more than 20 rebounds that season, one of only seven 20-20 men in NCAA history.

A reporter, then working for a paper in New Jersey, recalls asking a colleague who had covered a UMass-Fordham game: "Hey, how's this guy Erving from UMass?"

"Well, he's not Jewish."

"He's not? How can you tell?"

"He's black."

"Oh. Well, how does he play?"

"You won't believe it. I'm afraid to write what I saw. He got the ball in the corner, took one step and was at the basket. On the other side."

"You better not write that."

Until very recently, Erving considered his entire life a mystery. He had no idea how good a player he was. He may not still, except that he has heard it said so many times he has no choice but to believe it. His mother recalls, "I made no plans for any of my children. I just prayed that things would turn out for them. I worked days, so I had only evenings to spend with them. And I really didn't see June doing anything steadily until he took up playing ball."

Don Ryan, who coached the first team Julius played on, a Salvation Army squad, and Earl Mosley, the Roosevelt Junior High coach, were Erving's father figures. Mosley remembers that the skinny 14-year-old "Jewel," as he was called in the playgrounds, was "an unusual superplayer. His talents were evident because he used to play with the junk shot, before and after practice. Twisting things, lobs and all kinds of spinning maneuvers. He wasn't a showboat, but I was amazed with his confidence."

The young Julius became The Doctor in a sixth-grade classroom, not on a basketball court. A teacher told Julius and a friend, the two top students in the class, that they might think of becoming professionals one day, as in "doctor" or "lawyer." The name "doctor" stuck on Erving.

Under Leaman, Massachusetts played by the book—big men rebounded and guards handled the ball. This wasn't Erving's style, but he went along, and he most impressed the few people who saw him with his jumping and rebounding—often one-handed rebounding. The sum-

mer before his junior year, Julius made his debut in the Rucker League in Harlem, and his play was phenomenal. The public-address announcer called him "Little Hawk," after Connie Hawkins, or "Houdini," for his magic acts, or "The Claw," for his one-handed rebounds and dunks. Erving finally went to him and said, "Look. If you want to call me something, call me The Doctor."

"It wasn't because I wanted to be 'The Doctor,'" he says now, "but because I didn't want him calling me all those other names."

That also was when The Doctor decided he could make some money playing ball and would forgo his senior year of college, a decision that made his mother weep. Because the NBA had a rule against signing undergraduates, Erving presented himself at the offices of the ABA New York Nets in the summer of 1971. But Roy Boe, then the Nets' owner, also felt disinclined to sign an undergraduate. However, Earl Foreman, the attorney who owned the Virginia Squires, felt no such compunction and signed Erving to a four-year contract worth \$500,000.

Al Bianchi, who then coached the Squires, had little idea what he was getting. "The first time I saw him," says Bianchi, "was at a press conference in Norfolk. I said to [Vice-President] Johnny Kerr, 'Jeez! Look at those hands!' Well, we put him in a three-day rookie camp, you know, threw all these kids out there and let them scrimmage, and it was unbelievable. After about an hour Kerr whispered over my shoulder, 'Maybe we ought to get him out of here now. Don't want to get him hurt.' We knew we had a prize. Best thing I saw? That's tough. There was a playoff game in Miami in which he ripped up Warren Jabali for something like 40 points, 19 rebounds, 19 assists. Once Julie was a wingman on a break and there was a bounce pass that had to be 15 feet past him. But that hand came out like it had a first baseman's mitt attached, and in one motion he took the ball in his fingers and stuffed. Jeez! It was like he stuffed the whole building through the net."

As Erving says, once he entered the pros "the chains were off." Dunking hadn't been allowed when he was in high school and college, and now he was stiff-

ing as if he had reinvented the art. In 1973, after Erving made a quickly aborted jump to the NBA's Atlanta Hawks, the Nets came up with \$4 million, and The Doctor brought his show to New York. And The Legend grew and grew. With the Nets, he won championships in 1974 and 1976. He scored 63 points in a four-overtime game in San Diego. He attracted the attention of the nation when he dunked from an inch inside the foul line in the first-ever Slam Dunk Contest at the 1976 ABA All-Star Game in Denver. And in that year's ABA championship series against Denver, he put together five consecutive games the likes of which no one had ever seen: 45 points, 12 rebounds; 48 points, 14 rebounds; 31 points, 10 rebounds; 34 points, 15 rebounds; 31 points, 19 rebounds.

And then Julius Erving alone did what nine years of lawsuits and million-dollar bidding wars couldn't do: he merged the ABA and the NBA in 1976. Said Dave DeBusschere, then the ABA commissioner, "Plenty of guys have been 'The Franchise.' For us, Dr. J is 'The League.'"

And because he was "The League" The Doctor felt he deserved more money than Roy Boe was paying him to play for the Nets—\$350,000 a year—even though he had four years left on his contract. A bitter holdout ensued. Boe unseated him to Philadelphia, and Erving became "the Six-Million Dollar Man." Philadelphia paid Boe \$3 million for Erving's contract and upped Erving's salary to \$3.5 million over six years.

The seasons that followed were trying for Erving, who joined a team that already had one superstar (George McGinnis), two stars (Doug Collins and Caldwell Jones), a couple of would-be stars (Darryl Dawkins and Lloyd Free) and a coach who could hardly bear it all (Gene Shue). Erving was forced to give up the dominant role he had always played in the ABA, but he was amenable. After all, it was all part of the master plan. His scoring average dropped from 28.7 in the ABA to 21.6, and NBA chauvinists clucked, led by Red Auerbach, who said, "Look. The ABA was a minor league. Over here Erving is just another small forward."

In Erving's five years in Philadelphia the 76ers have gradually become "Doc's team," as Cunningham puts it, *continued*

and a marvelous team it now is. Last season the Sixers lacked a dependable shooting guard and experience at center, and as a result they lost to Los Angeles in the championship series. This year they have the shooter in rookie Guard Andrew Toney, and Dawkins, at 24, is a year older. "But our biggest concern for this year," says Cunningham, "was whether or not we could get another year from J like the one he had for us last year." Did they? "He's had a better year," says Cunningham. The 76ers rewarded Dr. J with another multi-million deal that included an extension on his contract through 1985 and payments of more than \$100,000 per year for 15 years after his retirement.

All of which brings us back to Erving's belief that all of this was predestined. "Really, everything that had occurred in my life had been a mystery to me," he says. "I just couldn't come up with explanations. I guess I solved those mysteries in 1978. I had just finished a bad season. I played most of it with a groin injury, my knees were bothering me, people were saying that I was over the hill as a player and the Philadelphia fans were angry. Maybe I felt sorry for myself. That summer I attended a family reunion and met more than 300 blood relatives. There were people I didn't even know who really cared about me and made me more aware of my family history. Some of them shared their feelings about what was happening with my life and my career and why I was in the position I was in. I had asked myself many times, 'Who am I? What does being Dr. J mean?' My Uncle Alfonso really simplified it for me. He said, 'Somebody along the line really laid a blessing on you.' It was as if maybe my great-grandmother or great-grandfather said, 'Two generations from now the first son of a second son shall be blessed.' That got me reinterested in the Bible, and eventually I accepted Jesus into my life and all the mysteries became clear.

"I divided my life into three periods. The first 11 years of my life, my parents were separated. When I was 11 my father was struck by a car and killed. He didn't live with us, but still, now I didn't have a father, and even though he hadn't been around, now there was no possibility that he ever would be. At 19 I lost my brother, the only brother that I had.

That ended the second phase. In the third phase I just went on taking things as they came, and I became Dr. J, and that lasted until I was 29. That was when I accepted Christ. Then I realized I was in a fourth period, the one I'm in now. I see how sheltered I've been, how passive. That's the thing I need to change."

Passive? Dr. J passive? "That's something that I'm not totally happy with, but it's me," he says. "The feeling I have on the basketball court is that I'm free and I'm the initiator." He puts emphasis on the *toe*. "When I'm off the court I move into a state where I'm not the one taking the initiative. Most of the time I'm reacting—answering questions, dealing with requests for this and that. Most of the time I'll acquiesce, because I feel I owe that. But there are too few moments in my life, other than when I'm playing ball, when I'm saying, 'What do I want to do?' It's too easy for me to sit back and take things as they come. And I would like very much to take the first step more often. But that's slow in happening. It's happening right now in the shoe store, but taking that risk required four years of debate in my mind."

Such is his nature. A thorough search for a single Erving enemy turns out to be fruitless. "I'll tell you," says Dr. J's business representative, Irwin Weiner, a cigar-chomping sharpie who came out of New York's Garment District and now represents some 60 athletes, "you won't find anybody who doesn't like Julius. And if you do, there's something radically wrong with that person. Plenty of people don't like me, and plenty of people have told him to stay away from me. But I've never known a nicer person in my life. And his friends are friends forever. You go to a party at his home, there may be a transit cop, a jazz musician, the president of Schenley Liquors."

How then does this man, who insists that plain, mortal Julius Erving and the legendary Dr. J are one and the same, deal with adulation that often crosses the border into worship? "Well, I acknowledge it," he says. "But I can sit in clear conscience with the knowledge that I am representing God. And if it's happening for me, then it's happening for Him."

But can God dunk from behind the glass? "No, but He obviously said that I can do it. My greatest joy in playing basketball is the daringness of it. Daring to

be great. Dribbling the ball in junior high school, knowing I could pick the ball up in one hand off the dribble, or one hand off the backboard, changing my path while in the air—it all seemed pretty safe to me. I was fortunate that I was never discouraged from doing those things, and the reason was that I was a winner. Besides, to tell the truth, I thought everybody could do those things."

More important to Erving than feeding the legend is feeling the pride. He says the best compliment he ever received came from Henry Bibby, after Bibby was cut by the 76ers this season. "The thing about you that's so special to me," Bibby said, "is that you come to play every night. I've played with a lot of stars and I can't say that about any other stars."

That is what Julius Erving is about. He is here to set an example and he is determined to do it right. He emphasizes that he "never, ever ever" introduces himself to people as Dr. J. Always Julius. And he never consciously intimidates or talks down to people. He is especially concerned about children. "They come at me all the time, yelling, 'Hey, Doc! Hey, Dr. J!' That's cool. I answer them in a minute. But I never encourage them to try to be like me. I want them to see I am a hard-working successful black man. There are 250 basketball players in a country of 250 million people," I tell them. "You think you're one in a million? If there were a million guys lined up here, could you beat them all one-on-one?"

"For a long time I didn't think there was anything I couldn't do on a basketball court, and I can't believe there is anything I can't do now. Only thing is, I used to be able to do them at the drop of a hat. Now I need to collect myself a little bit first. But that belief has been expanded to the point where I feel that nothing is impossible. And if nothing is impossible, then basketball is just a tiny part of it."

And that is where he stands, this athlete looking at his twilight years. He is already a lock in the business world, even if his shoes turn out to be too classy for Philadelphians. He doesn't rule out politics, considering himself "a crossover"—a liberal black man operating easily in a conservative white world. It is as though what is coming next for him is a private joke. For the end of Dr. J, Superstar, will merely be the beginning of J.W. Erving II, Superstar.



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Reminiscence

by PETER MENKE

THE ART OF SHOOTING A BOTTLE CAP, BY A BOY WHO CAPPED A CHAMPIONSHIP

In Brooklyn in the late 1930s and early '40s, people were pretty poor, and in the German-Irish section of Flatbush, where we lived, our sports reflected that condition. We played stickball, of course, and we would spend hours sanding down broom handles, which made the best bats. It wasn't so much that the sanding made them easier to grip, or even that—as some aficionados insisted—you could hit a ball truer if the "stick" were perfectly smooth. It was rather a matter of pride: if you were a serious stickball player, you would sand your bat, and that was that. A good worker takes care of his tools.

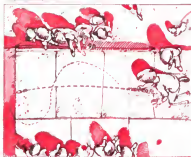
We played marbles and Three Steps to Germany and ring-a-leevio, and we flipped war cards, the favorite ones being the terrifically gory scenes of the civil war in Spain, the Boxer Rebellion in China and the Russo-Japanese war. We also cared passionately about the somewhat esoteric game of bottle-cap shooting. Boys in dirty knickers with garters dangling and socks around the ankles spent many a long afternoon on the sidewalks and in the alleys of Flatbush huddled along the shooting line with bottle caps.

Shooting bottle caps was an art, and there were several ways to do it. First of all, you needed a good shooter. A shooter was simply a smooth bottle cap, one that had not been bent at all in the opening of the bottle.

We would continually scavenge local and not-so-local candy stores for used bottle caps, looking for both variety and quality. Most of us had complete sets of caps from every brand of sarsaparilla, cream soda, cola, ginger ale, black cherry, orange, root beer, vanilla and chocolate that was available at the time. But because you could always lose them in a game, you needed to keep searching, and

besides, there was always the possibility that a new brand or a better cap of an old brand would turn up. So we did a good job of stripping the stores clean of bottle caps.

One of the best sources was an Italian candy store on Quentin Road, known in street parlance (and undoubtedly in many of the houses, too) as "Woppie's store." I no longer remember the owner's name, but he was a patient and long-suffering man. The first time I went in there, at age 5 or 6, I went up to him and in my ignorance asked, "Please, Mr. Woppie, do you have any bottle caps?" He stared at me for a long time. I didn't think this was strange, though, because at that age I didn't think anything grown-ups did was strange. After a while he went behind the counter to the cooler and scooped out a handful of caps for me. Being polite, I naturally said, "Thank you, Mr. Woppie," and ran out clutching my treasure. When I repeated this story to my parents they were furious, but I didn't find that strange, either.



The first thing to do with the bottle caps was to sort them, singling out a few of the best ones to be made into shooters. These would be painstakingly rubbed with steel wool until they were shiny silver. We thought that the steel-wool treatment would make the caps more slippery, so that when shot, they would travel swiftly and cleanly on target. Looking back, I rather doubt that scrubbing off

the brand name had any effect on the performance of the caps at all, but you never know. It was particularly hard to get all the color out of the grooves along the sides, but it was important to do so. Kids with sloppily cleaned shooters had trouble getting a game; it wasn't worth the risk of losing a good shooter to a kid with a beat-up one. A carefully prepared shooter could be the difference between winning and losing, and part of the value of the game was determined by the time put into the preparation. It was also difficult to pry out the cork that lined the inside of the caps. While sometimes it would just pop out, often it was glued and the cap had to be scraped meticulously clean with a knife before the next step in proper refinishing could be begun.

After you had half a dozen caps properly shined, you would light a candle and fill the caps with wax, scraping off the excess with a knife until the wax was perfectly level. Horsing around at school, we would sometimes shoot with empty bottle caps, but the real contests were always performed with wax-filled shooters. The wax made the caps heavier, so they traveled farther than the unfilled ones and were useful for butting an opponent's shooter out of a favorable position.

After the wax hardened, usually overnight, we would hit the streets armed with our shooters and a pocketful of empties (if you were particularly prosperous, a bagful). There were two main places to play.

The first, really for beginners, was in the alley. The people who lived nearby encouraged the bottle-cap shooters and frequently would bring out ice water or lemonade and check how we were doing. They preferred us in the alley to the older kids, who would smoke and swear and break bottles and play handball against the wall.

As the game was played in the alley you simply stood with one foot against one wall and tossed your *shooters*

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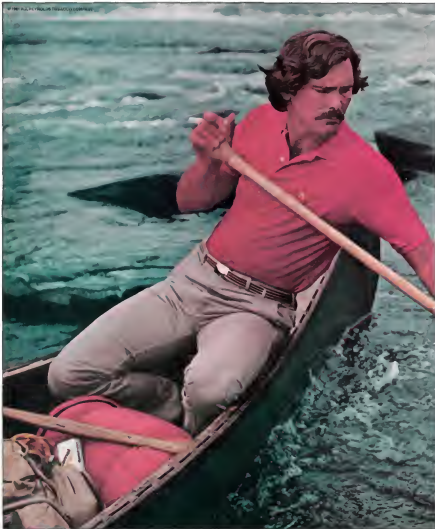
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**Manufacturer's suggested retail price for 626 Coupe shown. 626 Sedan \$8995. Actual prices set by dealers. Taxes, license, freight, options (wide tires/cover \$150-\$160) and other dealer charges extra. Prices may change without notice. Availability at dealers of vehicles with specific features may vary.

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shooter toward the other wall. The shooter closest to the wall was the winner. You could play this game with from two to five players. Because we became adept at the game, and because the wax-filled shooters wouldn't normally bounce back too far from the wall, playing with more than five participants made the frequency of extremely close calls very common and led to many arguments as to exactly who was really closest. This necessitated an umpire, usually an older boy or one of the unemployed grown-ups in the neighborhood.

If you were a winner the prize was customarily the other shooters, but when a boy (in those chauvinistic days, bottle-cap shooting was strictly a masculine affair) was down to his last shooter, he could put up as collateral anywhere from two to six unfilled bottle caps, depending on their condition and relative rarity. We thought of these empties as our infantrymen, generally expendable, the shooters were our captains.

But when you got to be 8 or 9 years old and had been working hard perfecting your skills, playing alley bottle caps was not enough of a challenge. The top-flight matches took place out on the sidewalks. There we'd stand behind the line of a sidewalk square and shoot toward the edge of another square, usually the third, about 9 feet away. Some boys played that the winner was the one who tossed his shooter closest to the line, on either side, but we tended to sneer at them. The real art was getting close to that line without going over it, over the line was out for us. The perfect toss, which happened more often than one might think, was putting the shooter right up to the line. This was why the polished and wax-filled shooter was so important. You couldn't control an empty bottle cap in this game; it would simply roll away.

The preferred methods of shooting the caps varied enormously. There were a few hot dogs who made some neat shots by simply arcing the cap in an underhanded throw, the way you might throw bird seed out on the lawn. This method had the advantage of cleaning the sidewalk cracks, but it was very hard to control the cap and it would often roll into the gutter. Sometimes the was was jarred out of it by the hard landing, which was

a foul. But like basketball players with the soft touch, some bottle-cap shooters did very well this way. The orthodox manner of shooting caps was basically the same as shooting marbles: crouching down, holding the cap on your index and middle fingers and flicking it out with the thumb. The trick was to get it over the first sidewalk line with enough force to skid over the second sidewalk line and slide to a stop just before the third. It was a delicate operation and required as much practice as any other athletic feat I can think of.

In the summer of 1941, when I was eight years old, I was involved in a Great Championship Match. It had begun as a challenge match—the boys of East 32nd Street, where I lived, against the boys of East 33rd. (A year or so later we would have more serious confrontations, including scaling tin cans flattened for the war effort at one another.) But in the course of a long day, it became a contest involving the whole neighborhood, with the losers gradually dropping out empty-handed. We must have been out there six hours under a burning sun, the crowd of spectators growing as the match proceeded. My shooting was in the groove that day; I had that wonderful feeling, that gift sport sometimes bestows, that I could do anything I wanted. My shots—orthodox style—were consistently sliding to within one or two inches of the line. I had beaten almost everyone. At the end of the day there were just two of us left, and we had so many bottle caps that someone brought each of us a grocery cart on to keep them in.

The other player was a tall boy named Martin. I don't remember his last name. I don't think he was even a regular bottle-cap shooter, just one of those remarkably coordinated athletes who could do everything well. He threw his cap underhanded and had that special knack of tossing it so softly that it would take one or two small bounces and stop near the line. He could also pitch it so it landed flat, much like a good horseshoe player does.

So at the close of day, it was just the two of us. We played one-on-one, with our respective friends cheering wildly, for about an hour, with neither of us getting the upper hand. Occasionally he would

make a weak throw, and I'd feel he was losing concentration. (Concentration, as in most sports, is the key to shooting bottle caps.) But then he would immediately come back and bounce one a half inch from the line. We even upped the ante and played for 20, then 30, then 50 caps at a time, and still neither of us could win the necessary three times in a row. There was clearly only one way to settle the championship a one-game shootout, winner take all.

An older boy flipped a coin to see who would go first. It was generally an advantage to go last, though it could be a disadvantage, too: if the first player made a bad shot or went over the line, the second player had an almost automatic win. On the other hand, if the first player made a good shot, he put a lot of pressure on the second player, who often went over the line trying to pass the first cap. Heads. Martin would go first, tails, I would go first. It was heads, and I had the advantage. There was complete silence as Martin leaned over for his throw. His shooter landed off-center and rolled crazily over the line as all my friends jumped and roared. But the shooter didn't stop rolling. The cap turned around in a circle, headed back toward the square and shuddered to a stop right on the line. A perfect shot! The 33rd Street boys whooped and cheered. There were vague mutterings from our side: while it occasionally happened that a thrown cap would circle back like that, to decide the championship on a fluke just didn't seem fair. But there it lay, apparently unbeatable.

I didn't look at it very long. The crowd receded from my vision and Martin's shooter grew in my eyes until it was the size of a washbasin. I crouched down and shot. My bottle cap slid across the sidewalk like a torpedo in slow motion. It just cleared the first line, skidded over the second with a little "tuck" that sounded very loud and clicked against Martin's shooter with just enough force to push it over the line.

It was a triumphant moment. To this day I don't know whether it affected me for good or ill, my career peaking so early. At any rate, no one talked about anything else for three days, until the stock-ball game in which Eddie Hanratty hit a ball so hard that it rolled all the way to Avenue R. END

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THE NCAA's

Sir,

Curry Kirkpatrick's article *Hey, You'd Be Hog Wild*, too (March 23) was probably the best I've read in SI in a long time. And Peter Read Miller's cover picture was great. It totally captured the moment of Oregon State's doom. The one thing that bothers me is that SI has forgotten that there is a women's tournament, too. Would it be asking too much for an article about the AIAW's?

RYAN CURRY
Davis, Calif.

• See page 61.—ED

Sir,

The two-page photograph of the bedlam following Razorback U.S. Reed's shot that beat Louisville was a masterpiece. I didn't get to see the game, but John Iacono's picture told it all.

TOMMY DRIGGERS
Hot Springs, Ark.

Sir,

The sports picture of the year appeared on page 16. The moment of Mark Aguirre's utter despair, disbelief and disappointment was poignantly captured. Congratulations to Manny Milfan. What a great shot!

DICK KAULZA
Exton, Pa.

Sir,

I was shocked and amazed. In his review of the East regional, Curry Kirkpatrick stated that the Irish "wouldn't still be around if they had been playing somebody other than Doley, make that James Madison, surprise winners over Georgetown." This was not only an insult to James Madison University and all its fans, but also a pretty ridiculous statement. True, the Dukes were not very well known before the NCAA tournament, but their statistics—they were ranked among the nation's top 10 in defense—show that they weren't a "surprise" entrant. If Kirkpatrick doubts the ability of the Dukes, I suggest he listen to Notre Dame Coach Digger Phelps, who said, "James Madison is one of the most difficult teams to play in any situation. . . . As the coach of a team that beat Virginia, Kentucky and Maryland, who would know better than Phelps?"

JAMES WILLIAMSON
Christiansburg, Va.

Sir,

How appropriate that the "concerned, haughty . . . spoiled children of DePaul" were covered by the most concerned, haughty, spoiled and, may I add, knowledgeable writer on SI's staff, Curry Kirkpatrick. The

fact remains that, win or lose, the DePaul Blue Demons, Oregon State Beavers and Louisville Cardinals are three of the nation's finest teams. I also found Kirkpatrick's cheap shots, which he directed not only at DePaul's Mark Aguirre and Skip Dillard, but also at one of college basketball's most respected coaches, Ray Meyer, unnecessary, biased and unprofessional.

ERIC EWEILL
Hamilton, N.Y.

Sir,

Curry Kirkpatrick's unkind reference to Tennessee basketball player Howard Wood as "the mutt-on-chopped, squashed-nose Wood, who looks old enough to have dated Delilah" is most unbecoming. I don't think a writer's opinion of a person's facial features is relevant to a sports story. But if a writer feels he cannot restrain himself, how about a picture so we can form our own opinions?

Incidentally, Kirkpatrick could not have starred a young man more admired by the people who know him.

LINDEN L. GILL
Lieut. Colonel, USAF (Ret.)
Concord, Tenn.

SONG GIRLS

Sir,

Eight Beauties and a Bear (March 16)? Come on, SI, you just gave us the swimsuit issue. Aren't you aware that there are men and women who take your sports magazine seriously and would much rather read about the accomplishments of an Ann Meyers, a Hollis Stacy or an Evelyn Ashford? To borrow the words of UCLA song girl Renée Gibson, No way, gross; blow it off!

SUSAN ADAIR
Mammoth, Ca.

Sir,

Bruce Newman gave us a fine article on UCLA's song girls. However, I have one question: Why did you choose UCLA as the focal point of the story? Within the Pac-10 this season, the song girls at Cal, USC and Washington were all lovelier and more talented than their UCLA counterparts. Please don't tell the UCLA girls I said so, though. When I meet Julie Hayek in heaven, I want to be on speaking terms with her.

BRYAN CAMERON
Berkeley, Calif.

HAPPY BLUES

Sir,

Thank you for E.M. Swift's very good article on the St. Louis Blues (Taking Aim at the Stanley Cup, March 23). General Manager Emile Francis has proved once again that he is the finest and most innovative hockey mind

in the game today. I look forward to a cover picture of MVP Wayne Babych skating around The Checkerdome in May, with the Stanley Cup hoisted proudly above his head.

CRAIG WEINSTEIN
San Diego

GOOD HOLD

Sir,

It's hard for an Oklahoma State fan like me to admit, but Iowa is undoubtedly the premier power in college wrestling today. Douglas S. Looney's story *Lookalikes Do Abble* (March 23) was especially delightful and is indicative of the high personal integrity of Coach Dan Gable and the young men on his team. They are definitely a cut above the average, and very inspiring.

By the way, there has never been any doubt about it—Oklahoma's Dave Schultz is a flake.

TERESA FOLGER
Oklahoma City

Sir,

Douglas S. Looney's article was an excellent wrap-up of the NCAA wrestling championships. However, I have one comment: Dave Schultz, the 158-pounder from Oklahoma, may have been noteworthy as the favorite and as a flake, but his opponent in the finals, Ricky Stewart of Oklahoma State, also deserves some recognition. He won the 158-pound title last year and made it two in a row this year with a pin over Schultz. Earlier, Schultz had beaten Stewart in the Big Eight final and in the dual meet between the Oklahoma schools.

TONY NORDLAND
Massapequa, N.Y.

FIGHTING WORDS

Sir,

How wrong it is that in the same issue (March 16) in which SI published my letter questioning the use of bellicose language in sports reporting, there appears a textbook example of the very thing I decry: Bob Ottum's coverage of the world figure skating championships (A Munchkin and a Mind-set). He makes this most lyrical of athletic events sound like the conflict in El Salvador. I mean, come on, the Hamilton-Santee competition described as a "shoot-out"? By extension Ottum would headline Alexander Godunov and Mikhail Baryshnikov on the same bill as *Gunsight at the American Ballet Theatre: the Battle of the Pas de Deux*.

BUDD SYMES
Los Angeles

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